The Heritage of Yucca Valley

CALIFORNIA

INCLUDING GIANT ROCK

Vol. 1, No. 1

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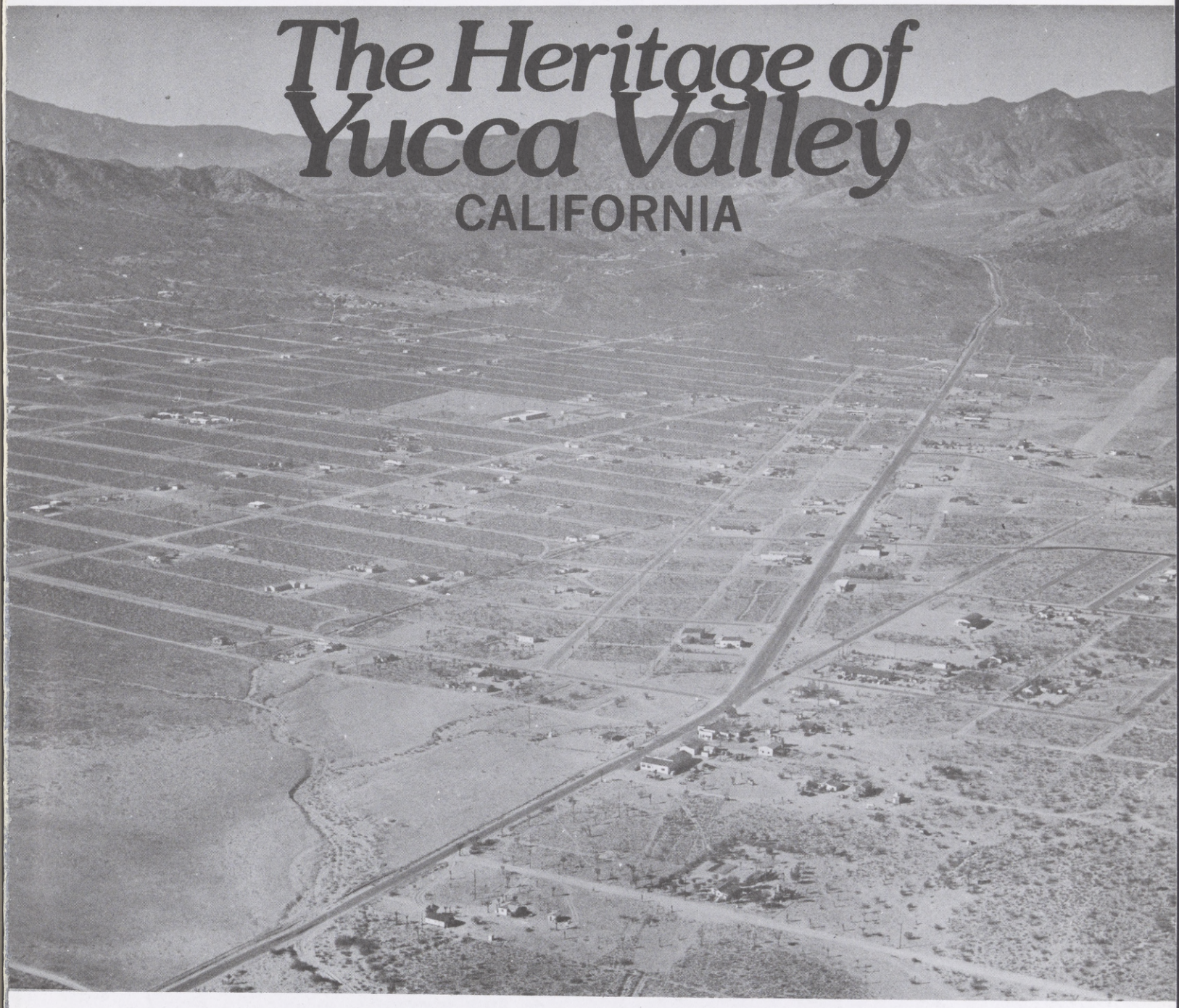
The population was sparse, but the spirit was high. The roads shown on this early aerial photograph are still being used. Can you locate any of today's buildings or topographical features? The wash in the upper right of this photo, leads to Pioneer Town. The barren area at the upper left is now Blue Skis Golf Club. Can you locate the old school house at Yucca Trail and Wamego Trail?

The photo was taken by Willie Boldizsar in the summer of 1947.

Willie Boldizsar

YUCCA VALLEY ... Big plans even in the Early Years.



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CALIFORNIA

This volume contains a great deal of material covering the chronological and statistical background of Yucca Valley, California. However, it is not just a history of the community. It is more a statement of the effort and dedication of those persons who made up the beginning of our town; their perception of what was needed and what they did about that need. This, then, is not specifically a history of the area but the "Heritage of Yucca Valley." It is perhaps a statement of thanks to those who gave us our thriving community.

The facts and photographs were compiled by Joan Wilson. The writing is the work of Pat Helm, with graphic embellishments by Neal Q. Vocke. Obviously, much has been omitted from this volume. It is the intention of the publishers to produce a subsequent volume in the not-too-distant future.

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By Joan Wilson and Charleen Grubb
Yucca Valley, California U.S.A.

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DEDICATION

This book, at first conceived as a history of Yucca Valley and its immediate surroundings, has become an enlarged "thank-you note." On reflection, though, this is indeed proper. We believe the most interesting chapters of any history are those that show the actual people, when and how they lived and what they did (or tried to) accomplish. And their inheritors should, naturally, express their gratitude. We do.

We decided to go a step further and include as many humerous anecdotes as we could, making it like no other historical collection the reader has ever read. We feel it is only natural to include these funny happenings and comments since, in the midst of many hardships, our "pioneers" welcomed with relief all of the lighter moments that came their way and kept them going.

As the story of Yucca Valley's Heritage unfolds the reader is made aware of the "true pioneer spirit" of those hardy souls who came early into the area and, without hesitation, embarked on a life of much hard work and precious few human comforts. There were no frills and a scarcity of modern conveniences clear into the late 1940's! Just surviving, our earliest pioneers made history. To them a good crop and a high wood pile were plush luxuries. What these rugged individuals built up may not be earth-shattering by world standards, but it all meant much to the future town.

From this hearty stock of so-called "little people," Yucca Valley grew into a fine, solid community of neighbors who helped each other in all ways possible. As the town grew and more people came they caught the spirit and threw themselves into helping shape Yucca Valley into the kind of place that everyone would enjoy living in — and they succeeded.

In the earlier-day rush to improve, develop properly and boost the town, the caring civic leaders and eager citizens occasionally made some whopping mistakes. Some were funny. Some not. But all were well-meaning errors and unintentional "crimes."

To all those who have gone before, and who have served to exhaustion and helped to lay the fine foundation for present-day Yucca Valley, we humbly give thanks for their unstinting efforts, their financial, moral and physical support, their helping hands and hearts. There would be no Yucca Valley as it is today without their time-consuming works and positive accomplishments.

Therefore, we gratefully dedicate this book to the people of our Yucca Valley Heritage and, hopefully, to the "newcomer pioneers" who must now pick up the burning torch and continue the life-flow of this ever-growing community.

We have painstakingly tried to include everyone who took part in the building of Yucca Valley. Unfortunately, there will be some who will be left out, but not intentionally. To those few we truly apologize and remind that God has remembered them. ■

THE FIRST

The discovery and early-day uses of the Hi-Desert area and its environs is, in its own way, a microcosm of this country's pioneer development and ever westward movement. First there were Indians; then a Spanish explorer; followed by a succession of Spanish adventurer-miners and later, under the colors of Mexico, numerous Mexican miners; there were also American miners, adventurers and surveyors combing and criss-crossing the area. Still later, there were the pioneer ranchers and homesteaders who operated their own mines and cattle ranches; additional settlers; and those who were sent here by their doctors to regain their health. Next came the population-bursting period of the "week-end grubstake" or, five-acre homesteaders who pored in from "down below" on weekends, holidays and vacations. With many of those original weekenders now retired and living here full-time and even more new people finding the Hi-Desert a desirable place in which to live and work, the population keeps increasing and the "settlers" boom continues.

LUMBER WAGON—Talmadge's Lumber Mill in Big Bear, 1800's.

As the original inhabitants, the California Indians, in a positive expression of their native wisdom, traveled back and forth between the lower and high deserts following the seasons and the best of the climates. No fools they. They stopped and camped at numerous canyon springs which then dotted the San Bernardino Mountains and desert-edged foothills leading into what is now known as the Greater Morongo Basin.

However, while the weather was pleasant, it was not all vacation-style living. In addition to providing for their food, shelter, clothing and medicine they actually were the very first miners in the area. They had been busily discovering and working the turquoise and gold mines in the Mojave Desert a good number of years before Juan Itrube, believed to be the first Spanish explorer of this portion of the Southwest Desert, set foot on its sandy/rocky soil in 1615.

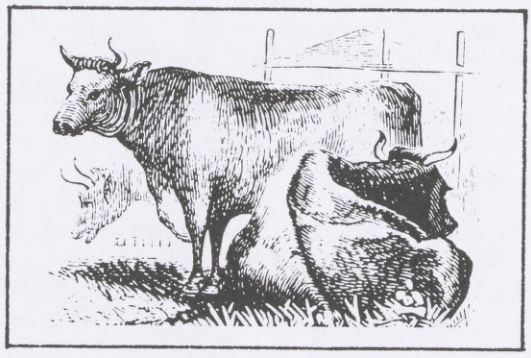
The torrential spring rains of that year had spawned floods of such diminsions as to create a bay in what is now the Salton Sea. Captain Iturbe sailed his ship, loaded with pearls, north of the Gulf of California right into the new "bay." However, typical of the desert and its elusive waters, the flooded bay did not hold and the water receded rapidly and flowed down into the gulf, thus stranding the captain, his crew and his ship.

Before the forced abandonement of their vessel and a precarious march back to Mexico, Captain Iturbe and his men took a quick exploratory trip around the northern "banks" of the departed bay and its nearby hills. This land is now recognized as the southern section of the Joshua Tree National Monument and, in their brief trek, they may have been the first white men to look out across the high desert valleys. Captain Iturbe's ship, pearl cargo intact, is reportedly still somewhere in the Salton Sea-bed area having long since been buried and blown-over with sand.

OUR FIRST PIONEERS

It wasn't long before the search for gold throughout the San Bernardino Mountains was on from many quarters simultaneously and consecutively. The Spaniards moved up through Baja California while adventurers of many nationalities headed east across the coastal plains to climb into the mountains. All were seeking the same thing — their own personal El Dorados.

When Mexico gained its Independence from Spain in 1821, all of its territories, including Alta California, were placed under Mexican rule. The exploratory mining and constant searching continued uninterrupted in the Southwest mountains and deserts with enough successful strikes occuring to fire the fevers.



CATTLE ranching, this area's first industry.

ONES

In our more localized area the Mexicans worked their way across the foothills and lower mountain ranges surrounding the high desert while the American explorers and early-day prospectors were gratefully discovering the established Indian trails leading to the west. These trails passed a network of waterholes and eventually crossed the Colorado River, the California Desert and on down to the coast. Unfortunately, very few records were kept in those days so little is known concerning the names and destinies of these venturesome men. But there were many of them. From time to time a modern-day canyon explorer may come across the surviving fragments of old, exhausted Spanish and Mexican gold and silver mines. Up until fairly recent years the remnants of an old Spanish arrastre from a nearby mine lay in Little Morongo Canyon. Then, in 1938, a wicked storm broke over the Morongo foothills and washed out that section of the canyon in the resultant flash floods. This has been the fate of many of the last vestiges of these miners and their claims.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

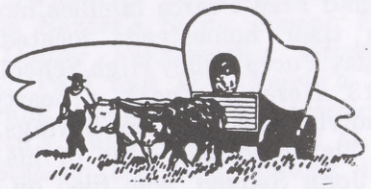
The first American Government Survey of the Southern California Deserts was made in 1855, when Colonel Henry Washington was sent out to accomplish the task. Headed westward, he stopped at the Oasis of Mara and reported the native palm trees as "cabbage palmettos." Then he followed the Indian trails leading into the mountains and, in doing so, crossed the floors of what were to become Yucca and Morongo Valleys. His records told of spotting familiar Indian signs such as wickiups, an occasional branch trail, etc., but not of encountering any actual Indians. What is more than likely is that the Indians were observing his passage.

The Oasis of Mara also attracted A.P. Green when he surveyed Section 33 in 1856. He counted twenty-six large palm trees around the oasis' springs and gave the locality its first recorded name — Palm Springs. Sound familiar?

Also during the 1850's a cattleman named Pauline Weaver just may have made minor history by becoming the first white man to cross the high desert from west to east. Weaver was one of the participants of big cattle drives into Arizona. The story is told that he learned of a number of fine watering holes and springs from some Indians he had befriended. Using this knowledge, he drove his cattle through the Big Morongo Canyon while the others moved their herds through Indio. He invariably got to the river several days ahead of them. It has not been explained how he did it, but Weaver kept his route and the location of the watering holes a secret for a long time.

However, a good thing like that is bound to get out and others took advantage of the route. Hank Brown, an early-day miner who apparently wanted to be helpful as well as leave a record of his own travels, left notes stating that he had followed the Weaver route from the springs to the river.

Still another somewhat indebted to the speedier cattleman was General William J. Palmer. In the survey of 1867, the General proposed a route to San Diego which extended from the Needle crossing over what is now believed to be the old Bagdad-Twentynine Palms Road. From Twentynine Palms the General used the Weaver route down through Morongo Canyon and across San Gorgonio Pass. One can't help but wonder what Weaver and the General would think of the present-day traffic through the Pass? ■



EARLY YEARS — cattle drive through Yucca Valley.

KENDALL STONE

Plucky Homesteaders

Among the attributes that the earliest homesteaders had in common with the first-arriving townspeople were the bravery required of them in living a remote frontier existence when they could be living elsewhere in more "civilized" surroundings; the strong ability to persevere; the rugged ability to endure hardships; and the serene ability to make do with no modern conveniences and with precious little of the comforts we now take for granted.

Since most of them had come to the high desert for their and their families' health they were willing, simultaneously, to put up with more and put up with less.

In 1910 a Mr. Percy, a locator of Government lands, filed on and put down a well in Section 31, of what became Yucca Valley. That same year Joseph and Mary Susie Heard came by covered wagon from Fullerton. With them were their children Alma, Howard, Katherine, Margaret and Patricia. They filed on a 160-acre farming homestead (now the Blue Skies Country Club and the Country Club Mobile Home Estates) where they lived in a tent until they could build and move into the Joshua tree log cabin. They planted various grains and alfalfa for their stock and a fruit and vegetable garden for the family. Later, Howard made the first beehive in Yucca Valley, made up of wild bees. Also, in 1910, Byron Pearce filed on a 160-acre farming homestead, The John Cariker and Fred Pearce families moved in and filed on their homesteads located near the present-day Yucca Valley High School.

In 1913, Hezekiah Quick, a hearty 73 years young individualist from Hot Springs, Arkansas, filed on his homestead. One of his daughters married John Redden, who filed on his nearby homestead in 1923. One of Quick's favorite comments to his family and friends was, "Mark you well, some day we will see a city at the foot of the hills."

Frances Sargeant was another strong-willed woman who homesteaded here in 1913. Then, in 1914, Martin and Minnie Fuller, the Smalleys, the Robertsons, the Kellerman family, Robert Grey, the Evans family, Mrs. Dutton and her three children and Frank Gullick all filed on homesteads here.

Walter Harrell came out in 1923 and filed on land in the center of the valley next to the road. He named his property the Lone Star Ranch and put in the first gas pump in the valley. His ranch is now the Plaza, immediately east of Hi-D Center.

The Lockwoods bought Byron Pearce's homestead in the 1920's.

Fred and Barbara Pearce moved to Pipes Canyon in 1924 and built a rest home of the Walt Gehre's property. John Minter filed on his homestead between Warren's Well and The Windmill. William G. Hudson, a Redlands attorney in ill health, came out in 1925 and took over the Minter homestead. He and his wife, Camilla, and their three children — Kippie, Jean and Billy — lived in a 10'x12' shack and slept in a tent. Looking back, Camilla said, "I don't know what we would have done if it had snowed that first winter!" They later filed on a homestead in Pipes Canyon where, for a short time, Camilla taught the local children in what was recorded as "the smallest school in the largest county in the country."

Claude Guinan homesteaded in Water Canyon in 1931. Ernie Sanders homesteaded in Yucca Mesa in 1932.

That same year an ill June LeMert Paxton moved out from Hollywood and homesteaded and built "The Joshuas." She soon started writing about the desert and published a book *My Life On The Mojave.* In her feature article "I Call On My Neighbors," she told of her first days and getting accustomed to the isolation and loneliness despite visiting neighbors. "An old, antiquated two-ton truck was our means of hauling the fire wood and water and served also, for a time, as our pleasure car. As soon as I could travel about the valley I learned that, scattered sparsely over the desert, there were people much less fortunate than I. It was then that I realized that I should not only recover my own health but also try to encourage others to do the same!"

THE REDDEN Family Homestead — 1923.

..And The Town That Grew Up Around Them

Meanwhile, up in Pipes Canyon, Stanley Bowden built his "House of Tomorrow," the only cabin with a rug on the floor and an indoor bathroom. He also had the only well in the Pipes area at the time. Naturally, this was the site of many get-togethers and parties.

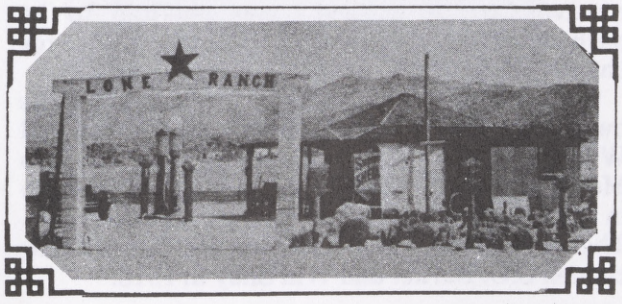
Still further up Pipes Canyon, the families of Carl and Nellie Jones, Dorothy Sall and Ruth Duarte homesteaded and settled in. Johnnie Kee, Sr., homesteaded northeast of Pipes Canyon in 1933. The Frank Bull's homesteaded in 1934, as did Lionel Sall near The Pipes, Tom and Rose Scarvan (near present-day Desert Christ Park) and Fred and Berta LaFerney six miles east of Warren's Well. Tom Scarvan was noted for being an excellent windmill "fixer." Frank Rogers also built a home, in 1937, near Warren's Well. The Kiner family moved here in 1939.

The Homestead Years ended along with the 1930's when filing on 160-acre claims was stopped by the Government. A way of life was coming to a close in the high desert. Some families moved away during World War II, either going into the service or into some form of war-work. But they moved back at the war's end.

Rene and Mabel Mellette moved out to Yucca Valley in 1943, purchasing property near the entrance to Pioneertown. When Rene regained his health he gave piano lessons. Mabel was a news reporter for the old Twentynine Palms Desert Trail.

Vance and Laura Danner moved out in 1946 for his health. He built his landmark "two by four cabin" on the south side of the highway (now across from K-Mart). Vance designed, made and sold lamps, jewelry boxes and picture frames from Joshua tree bark.

With the small town's first subdivision in 1945, came the first stage of the real boom. The Costa Mesa developers, members of the Yucca Village Co., were Fred Storey, Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Tamplis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estus, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Thomas Bouchey and Flora McCann. They laid out the streets, subdivided the lots and started the Yucca Water Co., Ltd.



THE LONE STAR Ranch, owned by Mr. & Mrs. W.A. Harrell.

The people really started moving in and opening up their own businesses. Some of those early merchants were: Art Katje's and Ken Fletcher's Lumber Co. (the old Quonset hut); Peggy's Cafe; Becker's Variety and Hardware Store; Jule Boldizsar's Shell Station and Yucca Valley Sky Corral; Tom and Vi Humphreyville's Yucca Inn; Ole Hanson's, Bob Potter's, and Bill Williams' Real Estate Offices; Sammy's Texaco Service; Ruth and Paul Albert's Yucca Valley Liquor Store; Sandy's Silver Dollar; Art Le Fever's Painting; Roger Stine's Feed and Fuel; Swain and Whitney Insurance; Jack and Madaline Barrett's Ice House; Barney Copley, the Desert Mason; Bill, Mary and Hattie Hurley's Lombardo Motel; San Ratliff's Laundry and Dry Cleaning; "Watty" Watkins Real Estate; Glenn Hammett's Wheel Alignment Co.; Wilson C. Lindsay, realtor and insurance agent; Barnhart's Desert Garden Nursery; Harry and Mabel Housh's Burnt Mt. Dude Ranch; D.D. Evans Construction Co.; Frances Akers' Desert Sky Motel; the Ray's Whirla Whip Drive In; Al Peters Real Estate; E.R. Jernberg's Grading and Paving; Bill Pace, general contractor; Arthur N. Leth, Masonry contractor; H.W. Creaser's Food Co.; Harre Starr, printer; Dorothy Chapman's Trails Motel; Master Cleaners; E. Ramey's Yucca Pump, Supply and Well Drilling; Pearce's Garage; A. Mayo Bradfield, goodwill advertising; George Mehrens' Upholstery Shop; Josephine, John and Bernadette Kreton's Desert Queen Motel; Dave Baxter's Signs; Joseph Freeman, surveyor; Danny Pekarovich's Grading and Paving Co.; Paul and D.S. Perrin's Lifetime Cabins; Frank Campbell's Galvanized Water Tanks; Gerth's Auto Parts; H. and M. Odgers Richfield Station; Blackie's Garage; Roy and Margaret Jewett's Desert Lamp Maker; Signe Ohlson's Juice Bar and Salad Bowl; Unigas; A. and V. Samson's Burnt Mt. Rancho Motel; Cheri Belcher's Roller Skating Rink; Al Furton, contractor; Boldizsar's Desert Sands Motel; John Ehrismann, electrical contractor; Jim Baxter's Yucca Valley House Trailer Sales; Ed Hardesty's Custom Floor Covering; Bill Adams' Road Grading; and Bill Brohamer's Stables.

These and others are the ones who have put the heart and soul into Yucca Valley — and the miracle is that, despite the struggles, most of them were usually enjoying themselves, loving their life-styles and introducing other family members and friends to the town — thereby starting off another cycle. ■

WARREN'S WELL

The usual pattern in the old west was for cattle ranches to be literally hacked out of the wilderness, developed into going concerns and **then** the "dirty varmint" rustlers would swoop down and make off with the rancher's cattle.

But, in the Greater Morongo Basin the pattern would seem to be reversed. Some twenty years after the swifter-moving drover, Pauline Weaver, rustlers discovered the Basin and began driving cattle stolen from ranches near Cajon Pass into this area. Here they stayed (in Hidden Valley, a virtual high desert hideout located in what is now a part of the Joshua Tree National Monument) until it was considered safe to move the cattle out to the Colorado River and across into Arizona Territory. This proved to be a profitable business for the resident rustlers until the adventuresome streams of eager prospectors and miners made it necessary to seek other hideouts with less passing traffic.

The honor of being the first local cattle ranchers goes to Ben de Crevecoeur and his brother who settled their families into Morongo Valley in 1873, and built separate ranches in Big Morongo Canyon and Little Morongo Creek. Ben, Jr., the first white child to be born in the Morongo Basin, made his initial appearance in the canyon ranchhouse in the year 1874. The de Crevecoeurs ran cattle from their ranches until 1884, when the families moved to Banning. A grown Ben, Jr., became a famous and respected lawman in Banning.

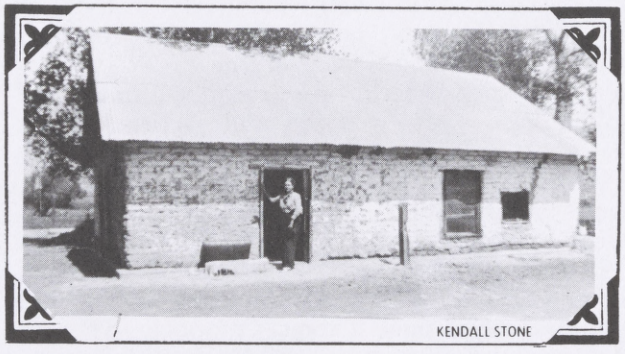
The year of 1884 was also the year that Mark "Chuck" Warren discovered the high desert. His family owned ranches in the San Bernardino Valley area. Chuck himself also drove freight wagons over the Chuckawalla Trail until he decided to take over the de Crevecoeur's Big Morongo Canyon property and devote his full time to ranching. His youngest child, Lela Angeline, was born at the ranchhouse in 1892 — the first white girl to be born in the high desert.

Chuck, his wife, Sylvia, and their large family continued to live on the Morongo Valley ranch, part of which, in subsequent years became Covington Park and the Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve. The latter is operated by the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department and was obtained through the auspices of the Southern California Branch of the Nature Conservancy. But, returning to those earlier days, Chuck dug a well — a good one — for the benefit of his cattle on the open range up over the hill to the east of his ranch. It, of course, became known as Warren's Well but no one had the slightest idea that what would develop around it in the years to come would be the town of Yucca Valley.

The well and the small frame house Warren built there became the center of life in this area for many years. Widely known as a stage-stop and a prominent stock-watering location, it soon became the magnet for most social life. Spring calves were branded there; mail was picked up there; mule skinners — freight wagons loaded with ore from the Dale mines — stopped there to rest and get water; and the stage, bringing travelers to and from the mines, stopped there.

A CARAVAN passing through Warren's Well — 1910.

ADOBE dwelling at Whitewater — 1929.



When homesteads began to dot the landscape, the homesteaders made weekly visits to Warren's Well, taking the family laundry to the adjacent reservoir to be washed, their children to be bathed and their protable water tanks filled for the coming week.

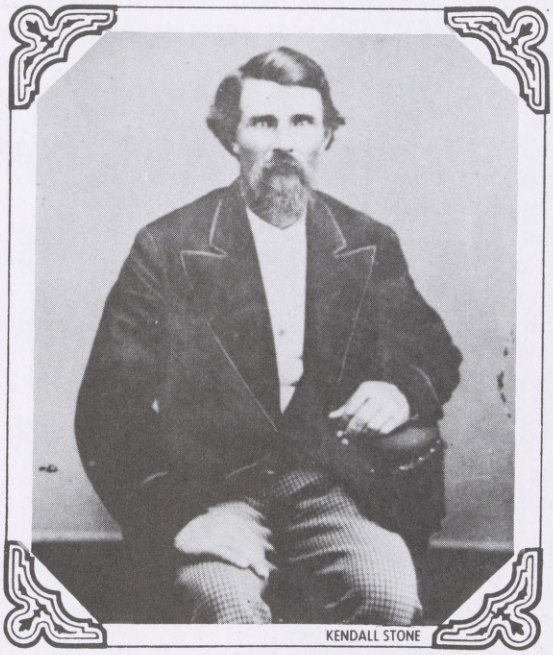
Completing the history of Warren's Well's owners, the Talmadge Brothers, John, Frank and Will, cattle ranchers from the San Bernardino Mountains, bought the well from Chuck Warren in 1909, when the stage service was discontinued. The operation of the well was taken over by Cattlemen C.O. Barker and Will Shay in 1918.

Then, in 1929, Jim Dever, one of Talmadge's cowboys, and a man named Berry acquired the well and ranged their cattle in the nearby area for about three years. Also in 1929, the frame house at the well burned down. Dever soon built an adobe house in its place. In the meantime, he, his family and Berry lived in the housing units installed at the well that same year by the Telephone Company during its Mojave Desert project.

Still later the well was sold to Sheriff James W. Stocker for his winter range headquarters. The cattle drivers from the mountains through Pioneer Pass and Yucca Valley were discontinued in 1947. What with the advent of the first subdivision and "city folk" moving into the "suddenly-sprung-up" town, it was thought best. In 1950, Sheriff Stocker sold his cattle to the Hamilton Brothers.

During the early '50's Dr. John Bendall filed on the well and adjacent acreage and became the new owner. He converted and added to the adobe house, making it into a combination medical office and home. There he tended to ills and injuries and delivered babies. One of this elite group of natives to be born at Warren's Well was Dorinda Ruenell Grubb. She was born on May 21, 1963. The daughter of John and Charleen Grubb, of La Quinta, she is also the granddaughter of Joan Wilson, of Yucca Valley.

Known as "The Flying Doctor," Dr. Bendall later built the Yucca Valley Airport on his acreage to the south and designed the runway and approaches so he could taxi his plane right up to his front door. In the '60's he sold the Warren's Well house to Mr. and Mrs. Lou Stockton, the historic site's present owners.



FRANCIS LeBaron Talmadge — Grandfather.

BURT, Francis and John Talmadge — Three generations, Circa 1916.

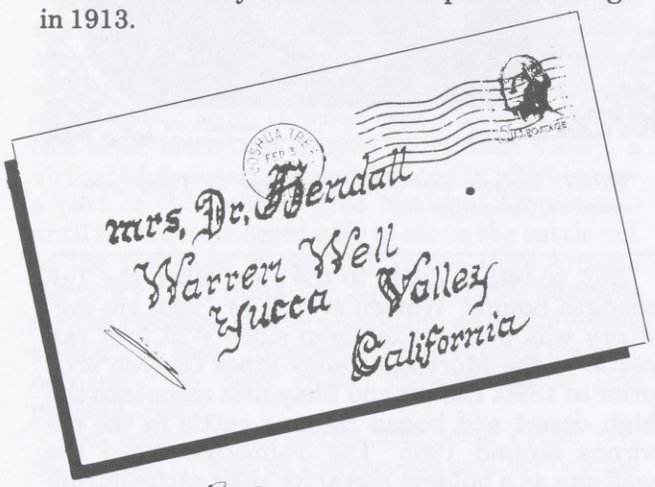
But, to return again to the past, when the Talmadges bought Warren's Well in 1909, the territory was not new to them since Will first ran cattle in the Morongo Valley-Pipes Canyon area prior to 1890. Barker and Shay first came into the high desert and began ranging cattle in the environs around 1905. The Talmadges used the well-site as a holding corral for their cattle during the spring round-ups.

In 1912, the Talmadges bought out Jim Smart and took over his ranch. Legend has it that they also took over the Smart brand — the JS. The lower part of the J had reportedly been broken off the branding iron. Be that as it may, the Talmadge brand and all their holdings did become the IS Ranch; and Kendall Stone, the great-grandson and grand-nephew of Frank, John and Will, said he never knew why the ranch was given the name IS. Stone is also known around these parts as a retired Undersheriff of San Bernardino County.

During its heyday, the IS Ranch covered approximately 750,000 acres! Most of it was leased from the government, thousands of acres were owned by the Talmadges and some of it was "just used." The mountain and desert ranch acreage included what is present-day Big Bear, Baldwin Lake, Moonridge, Rose Mine (Pioneer Pass), Smart's Ranch, Antelope Valley, Reche's Well (Landers), Giant Rock, Surprise Springs, Coyote, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley, Morongo Valley, the Joshua Tree National Monument, Devil's Garden, Thousand Palms, Desert Hot Springs, Whitewater, Cabazon, Whitewater Canyon and Mission Creek. Stone said many times during the spring round-up they found some of their cattle had strayed off across the wide open range as far as present-day Indio.

In order to provide additional water, the Talmadges constructed a reservoir, named The Tanks, in the southwest corner of present-day Yucca Valley. Water was piped to The Tanks from the tunnel to the south where they had already dug out the spring. Tanks were also built at Black Rock Springs.

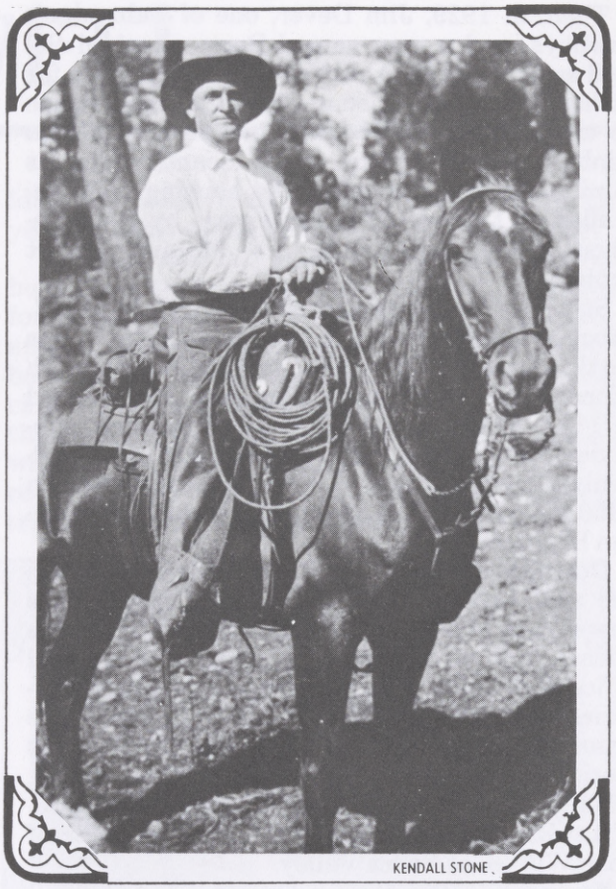
The spring at The Pipes (the entrance to Pipes Canyon) was developed over the years by the cattlemen and water was carried into an impounding pond by a stone-lined ditch. About 1910, Gus Knight, a pioneer of Big Bear Valley, held the property at The Pipes and ranged his cattle there. Barker and Shay secured The Pipes from Knight in 1913.



Warren's well
Was dug by Chuck Warren and sons, in 1870, and was used for watering Cattle, Bill Warren was Cow boy for many years, and lived at Warren's well, after Bill Warren got married his Brother Walter Warren took over the Cow business at Warrens well in 1910 the Talmadge brothers took over the Warrens well, and young Talmadge named Oat Talmadge lived at Warren's well and who was drowned in Bear lake, there the Talmadge bros, held Warren's well until one James Stocker, James. Deaver, Mrs, Berry her son John and Mrs, Dr, Bointon held Warren's well until 1948 after this date Yucca Valley took over,

Wm F. Keys

A LETTER written by Wm. F. Keys, explaining the succession of owners of Warren's Well as he understood it. Written 1964.



JOHN TALMADGE on his horse Prince — Circa 1919.

Will and Sarah Shay (Stone's uncle and aunt) homesteaded the tract in Pipes Wash east of the present-day junction of Old Woman Springs Road and Pipes Canyon Road. This is still called The Windmill. They also homesteaded farther west towards The Pipes.

John Cariker, of Yucca Valley, drilled a well north of Coyote in 1915, for Barker and Shay. A large reservoir was constructed there and a windmill was erected. The area that was then known as Coyote is now known as Sunfair.

The Talmadge's IS Ranch and Barker and Shay were two of the biggest cattle outfits in Southern California. The cattle business in this area reached its peak about 1920. The Talmadge sales of beef that year amounted to more than 200,000 pounds. Barker and Shay sold approximately the same amount.

When contacted for pictures and reference material for this publication, Stone started reminiscing and had quite an interesting story to tell.

Stone was born in Victorville, California, on January 19, 1919, but grew up literally living the life most little boys in America would have given anything to have lived. Raised on the family's mountain ranch, he learned early and, subsequently, did a lot of riding, roping and cattle

handling through the years. He also became quite familiar with chopping wood, harvesting the hay crop, feeding it to the livestock and other ranch chores. When they were still young boys, he and his cousin, Billy (former San Bernardino County Supervisor William Betterley), went on the twice-a-year cattle drives, moving the herds from the mountain meadows in the fall to the desert valleys and back again in the spring.

Like all other western ranchers, the Talmadges and their cowboy hired hands took a very dim view of the homesteaders and such things as the hated barbed-wire. Since some of the homesteads had no water on the property, they were given the nickname "sandlappers."

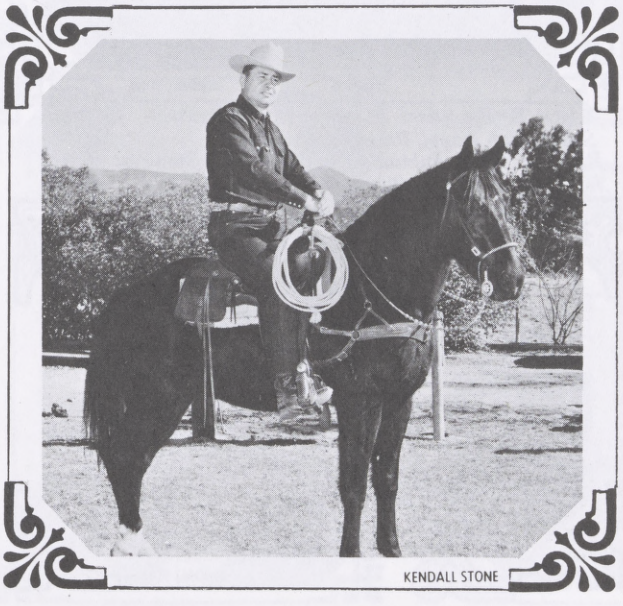
Thinking back, Stone made a list of the cowboys who worked on the IS Ranch. They were Harve Martin, Bud Waite, Frankie Paul, Jakie Thompson, Slim Spence, Jess Bangle, Bob Belt, Jim Dever, Joe O'Rourke, Otis Talmadge, Bert Talmadge, Bill Betterley and Kendall Stone.

He also listed the good horses from the IS Ranch: Ole Blue, Spelic (Playboy), Ace, Pinto, Arkansaw, Buddy, Big Enough, Cub, Dick, Mike, Paddy, Banjo, Montie, Chief, Dumbo, Prince, Long John, Savina, Smoky, Eleck, Pike, Apache, Pedro, Tom, Chub, Buttons, Baroso, Sheep, Flag, Spike, Snipe, Baldy, Badger, Pompo and Skeeter.

All the ranchers and cowboys would help each other out and go together on the cattle drives and round-ups.

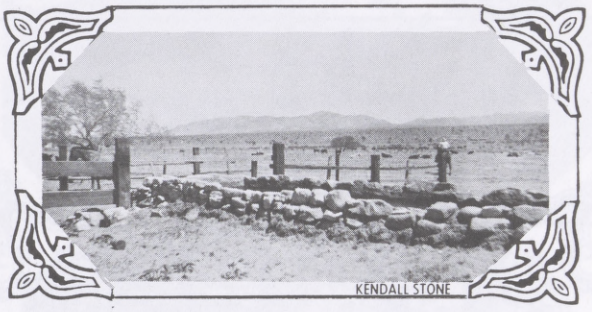
Some of the most vital of resources on these drives were the famous springs, water holes, windmills, etc. of the IS Ranch which were used by the Talmadges, Barker and Shay and other cattle ranchers of the area.

KENDALL STONE, whose help in tracing the history of Warren's Well was invaluable.

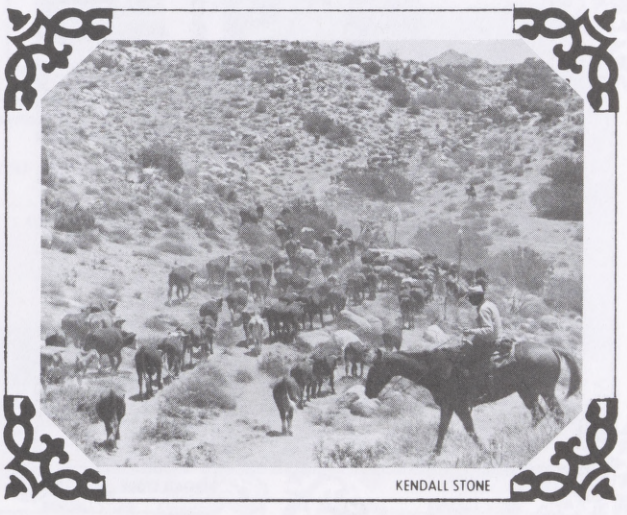


Among the springs and water holes Stone listed Saddle Rock Springs (northwest corner of Pipes Valley), Bryant Springs (also northwest corner of Pipes Valley), Chupparosa Springs — which means both Butterfly and Hummingbird (northwest of Pioneertown in an old Indian camp), One Horse Springs (Whitewater area in an old Indian camp), The Tanks (southwest corner of Yucca Valley), Black Rock Springs (southwest corner of present National Monument), Lower Covington Flat Springs (in Monument), Bull Springs (north of Yucca Valley and east of Pioneertown), Coyote Holes (Joshua Tree), Quail Springs (north of Smith Canyon), Stubby Springs (in Monument), Round Valley Springs (Rose Mine area of Pioneer Pass), Surprise Springs (north of Coyote lakebed), Whiskey Springs ("many with this name, located everywhere"), Mound Springs (west end of Antelope Valley), Reche's Well (Landers), The Barrel (below Ruby Mountain and Willie Boy gravesite), Visera — meaning Calf — (under Tip Top), One Hole (near mouth of Rattlesnake Canyon), Two Hole (near Old Woman Springs), Rock Corral (south of Old Woman Springs), Painted Rock (an old Indian camp noted for paintings and petroglyphs).

There were windmills at Warren's Well, Reche's Well, Pipes Wash, Coyote, Smith Canyon; plus a half-dozen windmills on the Los Flores.



ABOVE, tank at Warren's Well, used for many years by cattle drives typical of the one shown below.



Stone said that Charlie Reche, knowing of the existing earthquake fault, studied the lay of the land on his property, dug down 25 feet and established a very fine well. The Talmadge Brothers and Reche went 50/50 on the well which supplied all the water that was needed for domestic purposes and the range cattle.

Also, Reche and Al Swartout dug the well by hand that furnished all the water at Old Woman Springs. Prior to that there was only a small spring there where some Indians lived. An old squaw that lived there gave Old Woman Springs its name, said Stone.

Swartout thought up and informally designed a syphon system which could be turned on or off. Reche built it. "Reche could do anything," Stone said. This system was later described as "probably a water phenomenon." A hydro-electrical engineer who inspected it said, "The only thing wrong with it was it was not thought of by a hydro-electrical engineer."

Stone's great-grandfather, Francis, donated and hauled all the lumber from Blue Jay to San Bernardino for the first Masonic Lodge to be built in the county. He also became a charter member of that Lodge (the Phoenix). Years later when Stone became a member, that made the fourth generation of the same family in the same lodge.

Stone graduated from Longmire's Business College, in San Bernardino. From the time he was a small boy in the mountains he was as at home on skis as he was in the saddle. This skill came in very handy in World War II when Stone, as a Captain in the U.S. Army Paratroops, led a Para-Ski Unit of the renowned U.S. Army Ski Patrol in the Bavarian Alps.

When the war was over he returned and entered the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. "Like Reche, I was a special deputy for years," he said. Altogether, he served for 33 years, capping off his law enforcement career as the Undersheriff, under Sheriff Frank Bland, from 1962 to 1973, when he retired.

He and his wife, Mary Rose, still live in Big Bear where he raises quarterhorses and she owns and operates the White Dove Trading Post. Since his retirement they have also purchased property in Morongo Valley.

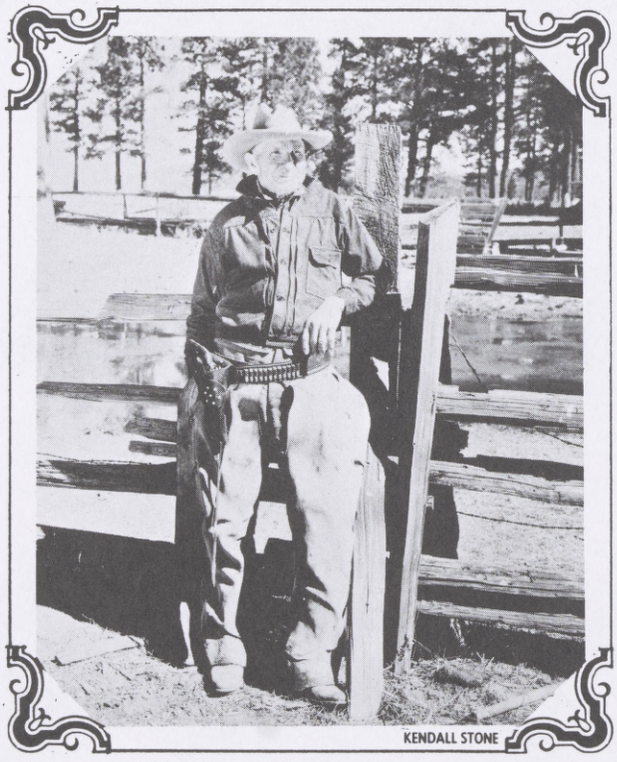
In summing up his life and his life-style, Stone jotted down the following thoughts:

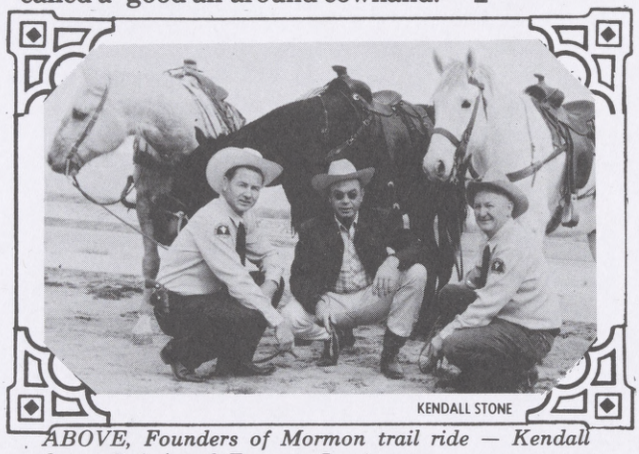
"A Superior Soldier — I would have to admit to being pleased to be referred to as a 'good and patriotic soldier' — and I was.

"An Honest Law Enforcement Officer — I also have to admit that to be called a 'good and honest Law Enforcement Officer' — which I was — is also very gratifying.

"A Wild, Wild Cow Chaser — But, I am most flattered, most pleased and most proud when called a 'good all-around cowhand.'" ■

WILL SHAY, dressed for a part in a movie shot at the Shay Ranch at Baldwin Lake — 1944.



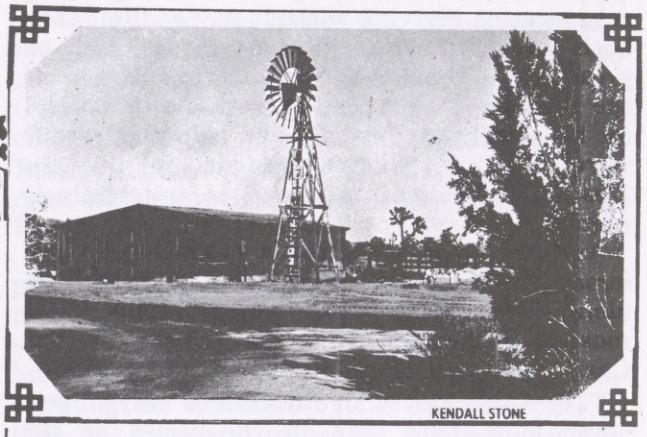


ABOVE, Founders of Mormon trail ride — Kendall Stone, Bob Angel, Freeman Lewis.
BELOW, Will Talmadge and Kendall Stone at Warren's Well adobe — 1940.

ABOVE — Circa 1916. Foreground, Will Talmadge; background, John Talmadge.

TOP RIGHT — L. to R., Elizabeth Dunlap, Sarah Shay, Martha Talmadge and Mrs. Whitley (first name unknown), taken around the turn of the century.

Warrens Well Album

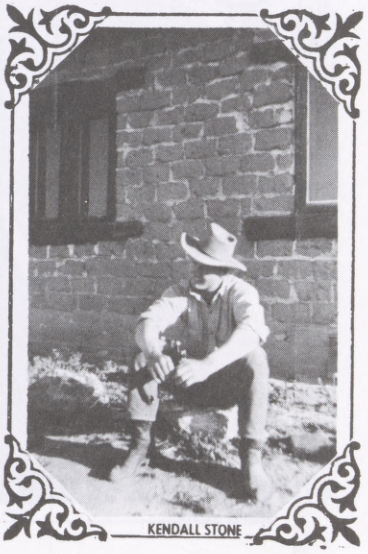


LEFT — Walter Reche on a wild mustang caught several years before in Arctic Canyon.
THE DOG was a Russian Wolfhound named Butch.
Above, Barn, Windmill and Corral at Warren's Well just before demolition.

LEFT — Jim Stocker.

BELOW — the corral at Warren's Well. JIM STOCKER, left, John Talmadge, right. Buttons Dean near the barn.

RIGHT — Kendall Stone at Warren's Well adobe.



Desert Christ Park

World War II had different effects on all those who lived through it. For Eddie Garver, who ultimately became nationally famous as the Desert Parson, the end of the war left him with a myriad of dreams and many prayers that he be allowed to find a location and dedicate it to world understanding and brotherhood.

He and his wife, Jane, both new missionaries, followed a passage from the Bible and chose the desert; more specifically Yucca Valley. There they founded the Yucca Valley Community Church at Apache and Santa Fe Trails (now the Christian Science Church) and began their church services and ministering to their growing congregation. Serving without pay at first, they both taught Sunday School classes and he preached the Sunday Sermon. During the rest of the week the Desert Parson worked as a builder for his livelihood. Friendly and helpful, the pair were well-liked. Though straight and tall, the Desert Parson was perceived to be genuinely humble.

As he set about his many tasks he did not forsake his dreams or his resolve. For that reason alone Yucca Valley is the "home" of one of the most unique features in the country—Desert Christ Park.

"The Lord moves in mysterious ways" was never more true than in the series of circumstances that drew Rev. Garver and Sculptor Frank Antone Martin together.

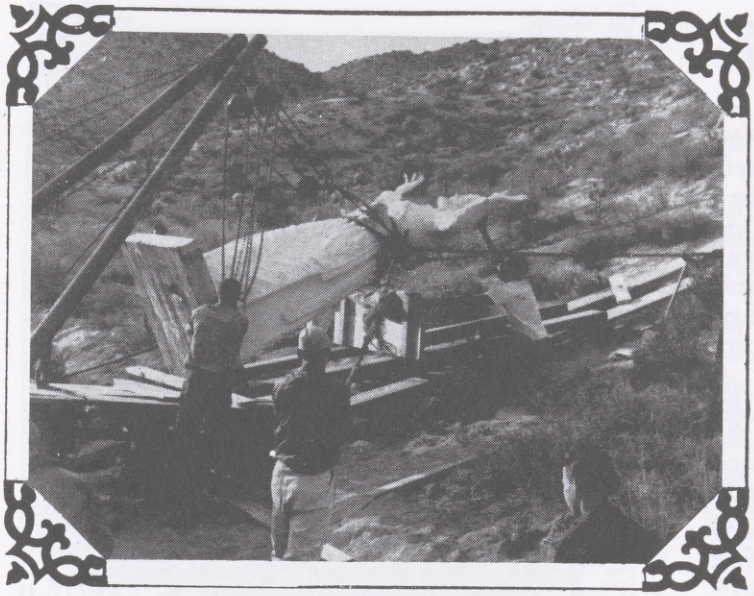
BELOW — Creator of Desert Christ Park, Frank Antone Martin.

Martin, an aircraft plaster pattern maker, lived in Inglewood, Calif., where he was also magnificently engaged in sculpting, wood and stone carving and painting—a true artist. An avid student of the Bible, he, too, had a dream. He built an awe-inspiring, ten-foot high statue of Christ in his backyard. It was made of concrete and steel and weighed 6,300 lbs.

His intention was to present it to the U.S. National Park Service. He had planned that it should be placed on the Rim of the Grand Canyon. However, the Federal Government had to abide by its division-of-church-and-state rule and could allow no permanent statue, cross or other religious artifact to be erected in a national monument. It was explained that the cross used in the Easter Sunrise Services at Grand Canyon was taken down again after the services.

National magazines told of Martin and his dilemma and his gigantic work of art (also an obvious labor of love) became known as "the Christ that wasn't wanted."

TEN FOOT HIGH statue of Christ, in place overlooking Yucca Valley.



HOISTING the first 10 Ft. statue of Christ a labor of love. March 28, 1951. Joan's Collection

Frustrated but undaunted, Martin offered the impressive statue to a number of churches. But, he insisted that it be installed in a public enough place that everyone might be able to see it.

Rev. Garver, still pursuing his hopes and dreams, had filed on a ten-acre plot on a north-side hill overlooking Yucca Valley. Five acres was for his church and five acres was to be retained by himself and his wife. When he heard of Martin's offer, the Desert Parson's dreams took on gargantuan dimensions. He contacted the sculptor at once and told him he had the perfect spot for the statue—one where it could be seen from the whole town.

The rest is history, but that sounds easier than it was. Rev. Garver asked the townspeople for help and got it. Clay Tunstall had a crane and block and tackle large enough to lift the statue. Tommy Bouchey, former Harbormaster of Balboa Bay, Calif., arranged for the use of some dock-side loading rollers. He, Gus Templis and Hugh Estes went down to Newport Beach and brought the heavy loading rollers back in a big U-Haul truck.

Performing another miracle of sorts, Rev. Garver and Ralph Kingston went down to Martin's home and, with a mighty effort, managed to load the statue on their truck, It was slow moving all along the way with motorists gawking as they passed by the struggling truck. When they got to the Morongo Grade it looked like they might not make it. Kingston suggested that they turn the truck around and go up the hill in reverse, as that gear can have more power. However, they did manage to make it and ease over the brow of the hill and drive on to what was to become the statue's permanent home—a hillside in Yucca Valley.

A foundation for the statue had been prepared on the hillside site. Those who had helped build the foundation and who now worked together to get the statue in place included (besides Rev. Garver, Kingston and Tunstall) such stalwart citizens as Al Livingston, Paul Mercatoris, Ernie Peters, Barney Copley, Billy Royal, Dave Harmon, Ralph Martine, Ken Witting, Bill Pace and Frank Garske.

Rev. Garver was anxious to have the statue in place for Easter Sunrise Services, which were less than a week away! Through Herculean efforts the statue was hoisted bit by bit up the steep, 50-foot hillside to the knoll. Tunstalp was aided in planning the operation by Dr. John Bendall. It was he who had made all the safety-factor suggestions and they were followed to the letter. It took days of diligence and dedication on the parts of the volunteers; or, as one of them said, "It took pure guts and hard manual labor!". It truly was a tremendous under taking, but the job was done, and on time. Jane Garver and Margaret LeFever had kept them all well-supplied with sandwiches and ice tea. Odis Ray donated many sacks of hamburgers and cups of coffee sent over from his cafe.

Both "Life" and "Time" Magazines had taken an interest in the moving of the statue to its new home. One of the statue's fingers had been accidentally broken in the move and the magazine's photographers took a number of pictures including one of Antone Martin explaining how easily the finger could be replaced.

Tunstall, looking back over the years at their accomplishment, said the statue actually weighed more than his truck. "I'm just very glad we didn't have any accidents and no one got hurt in getting the statue up there because that would have been terrible," he said. "God was looking after us."

And so, following the Easter Sunrise Services on April 8, 1951, the statue of Christ was dedicated.

Martin subsequently moved permanently to Yucca Valley and he and Rev. Garver immediately started plans for what they called their "Peace Garden." The town's first subdividers donated five adjacent acres to Martin. This group, known as the Yucca Village Company, was composed of Fred Storey, Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Templis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estes, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Tommy Bouchey and Flora McCann.

Martin had also moved from Inglewood the statue of Jesus Blessing the Children. All the other religious stauary pieces were done in Yucca Valley, paid for by donations from a moved and appreciative public. Rev. Garver, following Sunday services, would don his work overalls atop his "preaching suit" and help where he could.

The Biblical scenes depicted by larger-than-life concrete statues include that of the Holy Sepulchre with statues of the three mourning women standing outside the open tomb dug into the hillside, the Betrayal of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane; Christ at the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha; Christ at the well with the Woman of Samaria; and Christ Blessing the Little Children. In Martin's grouping for the Sermon on the Mount, he immortalized the Desert Parson by sculpting his likeness on one of the disciples' statues.

ABOVE, Antone Martin with statue of Christ, moved from Inglewood, Circa 1952. Below, Martin shown with statue of Christ at the well — 1953.

ABOVE — Easter Sunrise Service — 1955.
BELOW — Antone Martin shown with two of his creations.

By far the most ambitious and magnificent of Martin's works is the carved facade of the Last Supper. The head of Christ, framed in an open window, is carved in three dimensions. All the remaining figures are in bas relief. The facade is three-stories high and thirty feet wide.

While Martin was busily and happily at work on his beloved Biblical scenes, Artist Frank Garske designed and built the adjoining chapel. Here, again, Rev. Garver was in his overalls and helping out everywhere. After the work was underway, Garske and the Desert Parson asked Artist Kirk Martin to do a perspective rendering of the chapel.

Enthusiasm grew as the new chapel grew and Garske said he got help of all kinds from numbers of townspeople who would drop by and lend a hand at whatever was being done at the time. The chapel door was built and donated by the late Peterson brothers, Guy and Herb, Joshua Tree cabinet-makers. Garske said he was particularly indebted to Dr. Dick Sternxerg, of Los Angeles, who closed up his office for the whole of one Easter Week and spent his time mixing mud for the chapel.

Garske also, years later, designed and constructed the piers at Brownell Hall in the neighboring Yucca Valley Evangelical Free Church. For the last several years he, too, has become a sculptor of note, receiving national recognition.

Bob Stephenson

ABOVE — Sunrise view of Christ at the Sermon on the Mount.

BELOW — One of Antone Martins more ambitious projects.

Joan Wilson

CHAPEL, adjoining Christ Park, built by Artist Frank Garske.

As soon as the beautiful chapel, made of native desert stone, was finished Rev. Garver was performing wedding ceremonies there. It became a very popular plce in which to be married—may be because it could only hold sixteen people.

By this time the donations were reportedly amounting to $3,000 a month. Martin, using the money to buy the supplies he needed, kept working untiringly at his statues.

Unfortunately, he and Rev. Garver had a falling out concerning the property which was now known as Desert Christ Park. In the midst of the general misunderstanding, one of the reverend's parishioners bought the five acres retained by the Garvers. This was later sold to the church. A very saddened Reverend and his wife moved away to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Northern Arizona where they worked. Reverend Garvers has now passed away.

Martin, with the proven dedication of an artistic genius, continued his work until his death in 1961. By prior agreement, Desert Christ Park was to be turned over to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District after his death. In the interim period, before the district took official possession, Howard Clark and Mayo Bradfield maintained the park and its statuary.

Since then Desert Christ Park, under the auspices of the local district, has had such additional facilities as rest rooms, picnic tables and extensive landscaping planned and constructed. The night lighting of the statue groupings was designed and installed by Bob Kelly, a Southern California Edison employee and, at that time, president of the Yucca Valley Jaycees. The lighting project was paid for by the Yucca Valley Rotary Club.

The Yucca Valley Evangelical Free Church bought the controversial adjacent property and constructed its own church building. It now also owns the small chapel built by Garske. Easter Sunrise Services and other special programs are held in the newer Amphitheatre.

The last "gargantuan task" to be completed on property which was all originally part of the "Peace Garden," was in March, 1966, when the steeple for the Evangelical Church was put on the roof.

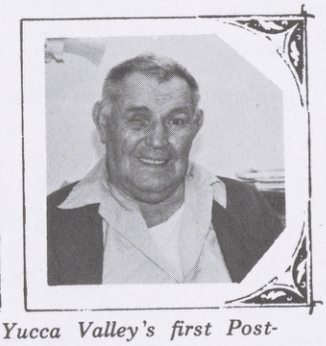
With Pastor Oscar W. Johnson and a number of guests watching, the 650 lbs., 25-foot high spiral was flown in from Palm Springs by helicopter, suspended by nylon ropes. Waiting on the roof, ready to bold the new steeple down in place, were John List and John Steele.

The helicopter was flown by Donald Landells, president of Palm Springs Aviation. He had volunteered to lift and place the church steeple, having gained experience in similar jobs such as he performed for the Palm Springs Tramway. ■

Yucca Valley Post Office

Mail was delivered casually in the early days by anyone who was coming up through the Morongo Basin from Banning. Later Johnnie Hastie brought it up in Old Betsy on a more regular basis. But the first real feeling that there was a U.S. Post Office in Yucca Valley was in October, 1945, when Hilda Hardesty generously decided to share her dining room with thirty postal patrons.

The dining room was in the family living quarters of Hardesty's Grocery Store. The store was located on the north side and across the Twentynine Palms Highway from the old Lone Star Ranch (later known as The Plaza and now the block-long-Hi-D Center). Thirty boxes, with pleased patrons to match, were installed in the dining room and Hilda became the town's first Postmaster.



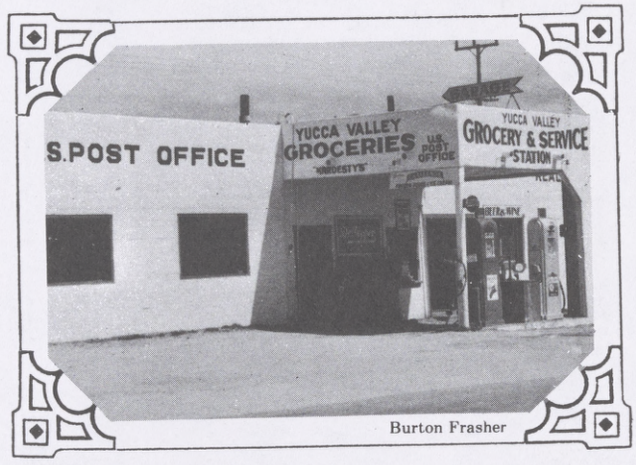
LEFT, Hilda Hardesty, Yucca Valley's first Postmistress.
RIGHT, Ed. Hardesty, one of our first merchants, in whose store our first Post Office was established.

She received her commission from the government on September 25, 1946. It was Hilda, incidentally, who named the town officially when she selected Yucca Valley and recorded it through the U.S. Post Office Department. Gross sales receipts for 1945-46 totaled a quite respectable $893.23.

The peacetime popullation grew and so did business in the Post Office and Hardesty's Grocery Store. More space and more boxes were needed for the people, so the Post Office moved into what had been the bedroom. Dorothy Stephenson became the first extra employee when she was hired in December, 1948.

More growth—and an addition was built on the west end of the market. With the welcome elbow room came the equally welcome second staff member—Jane Kie Singleton.

THE POST OFFICE at Whitewater. Yucca Valley received its first mail deliveries through this branch, prior to 1945.



YUCCA VALLEY'S first Post Office, established 1948 in Hardesty's store.

Things kept humming along as usual until one day in April, 1958, when fire destroyed the Post Office portion of the building. The familiar slogan proved to be right because, thanks to the employees, the Postal Inspector, Chamber of Commerce officers and many helpful citizens, the Yucca Valley Post Office opened for business the following morning in the Chamber Office in The Plaza. For six months the town was serviced out of the Chamber Office on a General Delivery basis.

Then, in the fall of 1958, the new Post Office building was opened on the south side of the highway between Elk and Fox Trails. Also in 1958, the first Star Route carrier honors went to Lloyd Havener.

Other employees to join the growing Yucca Valley Post Office in the late '50's and during the '60's included Gordon Barth, Al Oakvid, Daisy

Freeman, Paul Youtsey and Les and Dottie Pippitt.

City (home) delivery service was inaugurated on September 17, 1960, with John Stephenson the first carrier. He was joined by Bill Murray in 1961, and by Hamilton Freburger in 1964. R. Harrod became the second Star Route carrier in 1963. Bill Shemmer was added to the staff in 1964, as Assistant Postmaster.

Once again growing pains were getting out of hand and so a new building was constructed right next door on the south east corner of Fox Trail, its present quarters. The old location is now occupied by the Hi-Lite Lighting Center.

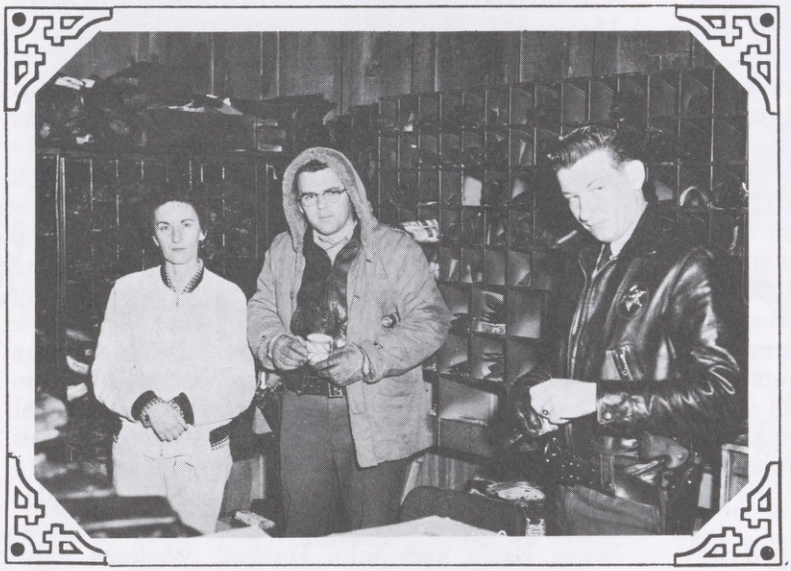
The newest facility was dedicated on October 17, 1964. While not as cozy as a dining room it does contain a much-needed 5,000 square feet of space. In May, 1965, the city routes were extended into more residential neighborhoods and business house delivery was inaugurated throughout the town.

On February 1, 1962, the Yucca Valley Post Office acquired a rural station—in Landers. Mrs. Vernette Landers was awarded the contract to operate the station. Her assistant was Mary Chessy who worked with her for ten years, retiring in 1972. Mrs. Chessy said when the station opened it had sixty boxes. Today there are between 500-600 boxes. Mrs. Landers still operates the station with the assistance of Virginia DeShon, Judy DeShon and Marie Fritts.

Back at the main Post Office, there are thirty-one people working here. Fifteen of them are city carriers and two are Star Route carriers.

Mrs. Hardesty retired in Dec. 31, 1975. After a temporary fill-in of Acting Postmasters, Peggy Wood was appointed and commissioned Postmaster. Bruce Boner is Superintendent of Postal Operations.

A study of the postal sales records indicates the steady growth of the town. In 1962, the gross receipts were $48,035.11. By 1964, the receipts amounted to $82,380.77, which was more than double the $37,750.32 gross receipts for 1960. In 1966, they had climbed to $103,982.92. Postmaster Wood reports that the receipts for the fiscal year October 2, 1980-81, amounted to $592,208 which was a thirteen percent increase over the prior year. And that was before the last stamp price-rise, too. ■



Hilda Hardesty

Ralph Kingston

THE YUCCA VALLEY Post Office has experienced everything from fire to blizzard, and in many locations.

UPPER LEFT, the morning after the Post Office fire, Hilda Hardesty, Ron Webb and Jim O'Connor survey the damage.

UPPER RIGHT, one of many businesses that occupied the present Post Office location at Fox and 29 Palms Highway.

RIGHT, Post Office No. 2, which was next door to the present Post Office. It was opened in 1958.

FASCINATING FACTS
ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

What is now listed on the maps and what we call State Highway 62, or, the Twentynine Palms Highway, was only known, in the days of the early miners, as the Dale Road. This was when most of the travelers were the miners themselves, or people doing business with them, and the road led to the Dale Mine and connected with other roads and trails to all the other area mines. Naturally, the original dirt road was not given the modern grading of today. It followed the contour of the land, going up and over the dunes and small rises, dipping in and out making its way higher and further into the Morongo Basin.

By 1934, when it was first oiled, it was called the Twntynine Palms Road. The State of California took over the first portion of the road, from present-day Interstate 10 to the San Bernardino County Line in the canyon, after 1941. It was straightened and paved in 1947.

The state officially assumed responsibility for the road, from Morongo Valley to Twentynine Palms, on October 1, 1961. By April, 1962, it was State Route 62. Then, in September, 1972, it accepted State Route 247, from its intersection with SR 62 in Yucca Valley to SR 18 in Lucerne Valley.

That intersection of SRs 62 and 247 (better known locally as the Twentynine Palms Highway and Old Woman Springs Road) was well-known in the early days to all those on horse-back or riding in stage-coaches, wagons or buggies. With the advent of the automobile, visitors in increasing numbers began to making their appearances. They seemed to have trouble in distinguishing between one dirt road and another. In the early '30's someone threw down an old, worn blanket in the road at the intersection and that remained the marker for those who wanted to go north to "Pipes Country" or beyond.

Through the years this became known as "crash corner." So, in May, 1960, a left-turn lane and a boulevard stop sign were installed on the highway at that corner. This was supposed to make the intersection safe. The present-day electronic signal system was installed and in operation on Nov. 8, 1973 and would have been deemed a miracle by the "blanket spinners."

The happiest (for both the residents and travelers) and most recent event connected with the Twentynine Palms Highway was the completion of the road-widening project in December, 1982. The highway, SR 62, is now a four-lane raod from Interstate 10 off-ramp clear through Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms. The last-remaining bottlenecks have been removed! ■

David's Store for Men and Boys held its Grand Opening on November 8, 1971.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Aztec Mobile Home Park opened in 1973.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

When Jule Boldizar had his airstrip and motel in the west end of town he also had a dog named Cuddles. It was a Heinz 57 Variety pooch. Its favorite outdoor sport was to walk slowly out to the middle of the west bound lane in the highway and lie down and take a deep-sleep nap all day long. In that time period, even on weekends, no one would think of harrassing the dog by tooting a horn or shouting at him. Instead, every single car drove carefully around him. How long would Cuddles last today? ■

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

1959 was a truly vintage year for new businesses in Yucca Valley. Among the newcomers who were very happy to move to the Hi-Desert and "set up shop" were Ted Keller, who opened the Service Plumbing Shop; Dr. J.B. McDonald, who opened optometrist offices; Iva Huneycutt, who opened his real estate office; Val Valentine and Ted Morton, who opened the Yucca Valley Liquor Store and Delicatessen; Lyons Furniture opened a new store; Whirl-A-Whip was purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Gifford, who renamed it Hi-Desert Drive-In; the Hat Rack Motel was purchased by Wally and Twila Estill; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Herman opened the Hi-Desert Shoe Repair in the Bonser Building; Yucca Valley Appliance Center was opened by Mac McCulloch and his wife, Dorothy, opened Stuff 'n Things right next door; Sylvester and Katherine Lukezich opened the Plaza Pastry Shop; medical offices were opened by Drs. B.J. Woodley and S.C. Hon in the Bonser Building; Barnhardt's Nursery was purchased by Harold Sipes; Sky Harbor Estates was opened by Elsinore Machris, Norm Essig and John Haskell; Western Hills Estates moved into its new location at the Old Woman Springs Road intersection; Mrs. Lee's Golden Arrow and Candle Shop opened; ground was broken for the new Waysilk Chiropractic Clinic; Ben Gage opened his Land and Development office; Mrs. Austin opened the Custom Drapes Shop in the Evanoff Building; Mr. Obar opened the Art and Stationary Store; the De Wi Ki Floral Shop was opened by Mrs. John Bruder; Mr. and Mrs. Orville Elkins broke ground for their Real Estate Office; Leonard Quigley opened the Plaza Barber Shop; Golden State Diary Products opened a branch office and storage plant here; Bruce Jenkins opened his insurance and real estate office; and Sage Realty opened its offices. 1959-1970. ■

FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

In 1931 the Ervine Market was built and opened by the bend in the road. It was later sold to the Lilley family, which, in turn, sold the market to the Hardesty family. In 1935 the first and only phone in town, a pay phone, was installed outside the Hardesty's Market. From the time Yucca Valley was called Lone Star and from 1947, when it was called Yucca Village (the first real subdivision) on through the first part of the continuous building boom, the G and M Market, Pop Hardesty's Market, Grant Redden's Market and the Peters' Market all faithfully extended credit to the building contractors and construction workers. They were building all the new houses but quite often did not get paid until the property owner had come to look at the work and progress, etc.

ABOVE, the original — Ervine, Lilley, Hardesty Market, Circa 1933.

RIGHT — Ruth Duarte and son David at her Pipes Canyon Homestead — 1936.

The first Safeway Supermarket was built and opened in 1964. Von's Market opened its new facility "way on the east side" in September, 1970. What with the ever-growing permanent population, the weekenders and vacationers and the people enroute to the Colorado River and back home again, both of these Yucca Valley markets led their chains in sales in Southern California — until the gasoline shortage in 1974. But they have both built back up since as the growing population more than made up for what became a temporary slump. So much so that both markets opened newer, larger and more super markets — still further east — in the part of town that the future planners are now referring to as "the eventual center of town." Taking advantage of this movement, Safeway opened it new Super Store on June 15, 1980; and Von's opened its big, new facility on February 25, 1981.

Ruth Duarte, a rarity even for the hard-bitten pioneers, came out to the Morongo Basin in 1933. She was an unmarried woman and alone! She filed for a homestead high, high up in Pipes Canyon! Unheard of, considering the real hardships and the likelihood of bitterly cold weather and deep snows in the wintertime! But, "Rootie," as the beloved John Olson called her, more than proved that she had the desire, the will and the grit to stick it out and make it work successfully — despite the fact that the deer ate up all of her first planted vegetable garden. It took a lot of muscle to dig out all the rocks and prepare the soil for that first crop, which she was counting on to can and carry her through that first snowy winter.

Whenever "Rootie" and her canyon neighbors came down for supplies and visiting, the trip home was a slow one as they could only drive at a speed of 3 to 5 MPH, following the cattle up the canyon trail.

Ruth Duarte

Then, in 1959, she opened and operated the town's first answering service — the Hi-Desert Answering Service — in a house on Bannock Trail. She later moved the business to Acoma Trail, its present location. She took over Western Union from the Yucca Valley Trading Post in 1961 when additional equipment was put in and tied in with the phone service. She sold the answering service to Ruth Gomes in 1964. She, in turn, sold it to Pat and Carlo Conradi. Ted Keep is the present owner.

"Rootie" had also started up and published the Hi-Desert Guide in the late '50's. She was assisted in this popular endeavor by Jessie Mann. They worked up an excellent mailing list and the guide told of all the clubs, organizations, restaurants, motels, major stores and points of interest to be found "From the Mountains Through the Deserts to the River." By 1970 the newcomers outnumbered the oldtimers and Ruth thought that these latter-day enthusiasts should know about some of the Yucca Valley people that she knew. So, she wrote "Colorful Characters of Yucca Valley," which was published that year.

Yucca Valley Fire Department

There may have been other fast-growing western towns that worked just as hard and just as long to get a Fire Department — but none worked harder than the sturdy band of dedicated citizens who were busily building the community of Yucca Valley and shaping it into "the kind of hometown we want to live in."

During the early ranching and homesteading days when something caught on fire everyone in the near vicinity helped as best they could — but, mostly, the places just burned down. Then, everyone from miles around really set to and either rebuilt right on the spot or helped the hapless victims move into another location.

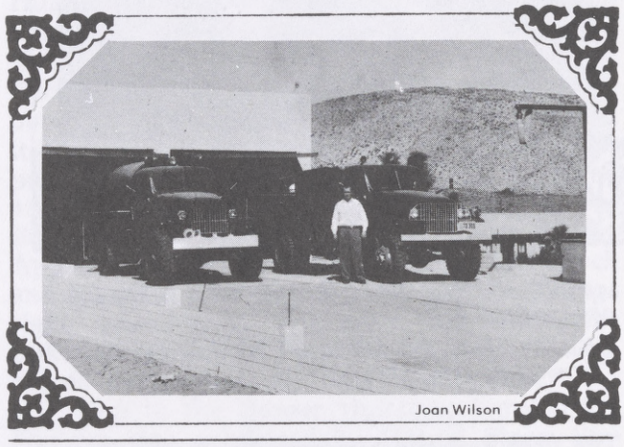
It was much the same in 1945, when many of the earlier residents moved back to the desert at the end of the war. Following right along were one of the first contingents of big-city evacuees who were seeking the quieter, less hectic life of a small town. Yucca Valley got its first subdivision — Yucca Village — and began filling in some of the wide open spaces in what is now referred to as the west end of town. By 1949, Yucca Village had built two hundred homes and business buildings.

Two serious fires and the resultant losses led an eager group of citizens, headed by Fred Storey, to propose the creation of a Volunteer Fire Department. One of those, who worked especially hard and devoted weeks of his full time to the formation project, was Clarence Davis. After a series of informal meetings a Volunteer Fire Department was created and Davis became the first Volunteer Fire Chief.

FRED STOREY, one of the early hard workers for a modern Fire Department.

YUCCA VALLEY'S first Fire Engine in use even prior to the building of Fire Station No. 1 — Circa 1948.

YUCCA VALLEY'S Station No. 1, housing our first Fire Engine and Tanker-Pumper, Old Nellie — Circa 1952.

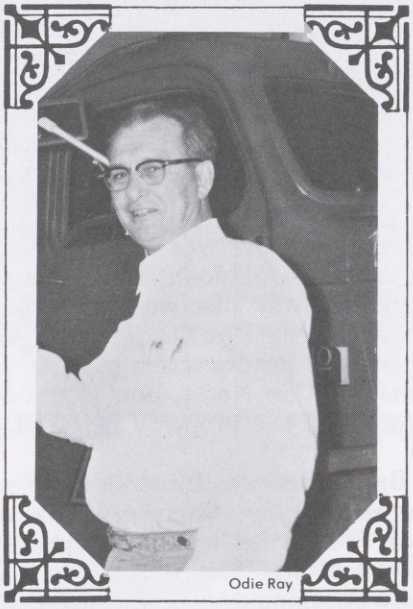


Next, Capt. Don Lewin, an advisory officer and instructor; Davis; Storey, Mac McClung, Blackie Owens, John Headley, Clay Tunstall and Jule Boldizsar started a fund-raising campaign for the purchase of equipment. The Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce got behind the volunteer movement and sponsored the fund-raising drive. While that was going on Alice Webster and Edith Peters spent a day canvassing the entire area for contributions and returned with a fairly fast $135.

Enough money was raised to purchase the first equipment — a fire truck and an auxiliary pressure pump. For personal reasons Davis was unable to continue as Chief and Clay Tunstall became the first full-term Fire Chief. Tunstall provided day and night housing the service for the department's equipment.

In those early years there were Annual Firemen's Balls to raise money to keep everything going. One of the most memorable sights for the townspeople at one of the first balls was the vision of Corene Hammett riding on the fire truck and wearing a beautiful, bright red chiffon gown.

Though indebted to all the volunteers and supporters, by April, 1951, it was obvious that a more complete operation was needed for the rapidly expanding town. County assistance was sought and a Fire Protection District was planned. In July, 1951, the citizens voted overwhelmingly for the creation of the special district which encompassed, at that time, nine sections.



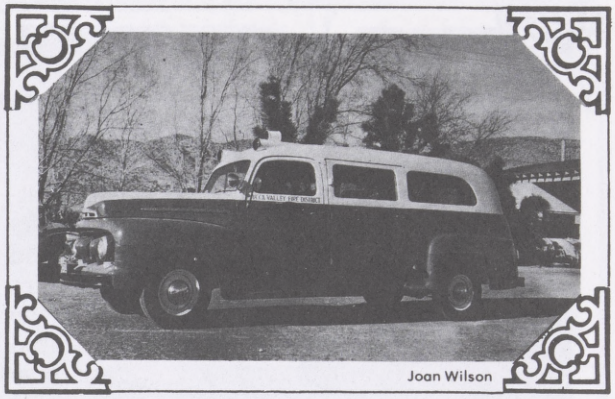
ODIE RAY, Chairman of our first Board of Fire Commissioners.

The first Board of Commissioners consisted of Odis Ray, chairman; Jule Boldizsar; Clay Tunstall; Jess Tonkin; and A.C. Stout.

Soon it was realized that a fire station with a night attendant and a telephone were musts for the district. So, Bill and Rose Pace who moved to Yucca Valley in 1946, and built their Buckin' Horse Ranch, donated a piece of their property on the Twentynine Palms Highway, just west of Boldizsar's Shell Station.

County taxes paid the district's operating expenses but it was going to be a wait for the station. Once again, the town got busy and the fund-raising efforts were flying. In addition to the balls, the Yucca Valley Community Players, as they were then known, put on a three-act play written by M. Brooks Buxton especially for the benefit of the Yucca Valley Fire Department Building Fund.

This was in October, 1953. A mystery entitled "Checkmate," the play starred Kenn Witting, Harold Westcott, Harry S. Wallman, Ruth English, Ruble Caerbert, Vesta Peters, Mary Hardesty, Clyde Barth, George Scott and Charlsie, Floyd and Sandi Peters.



YUCCA VALLEY'S first ambulance, sponsored by the Lions Club, purchased with public contributions, operated by Volunteer Firemen.

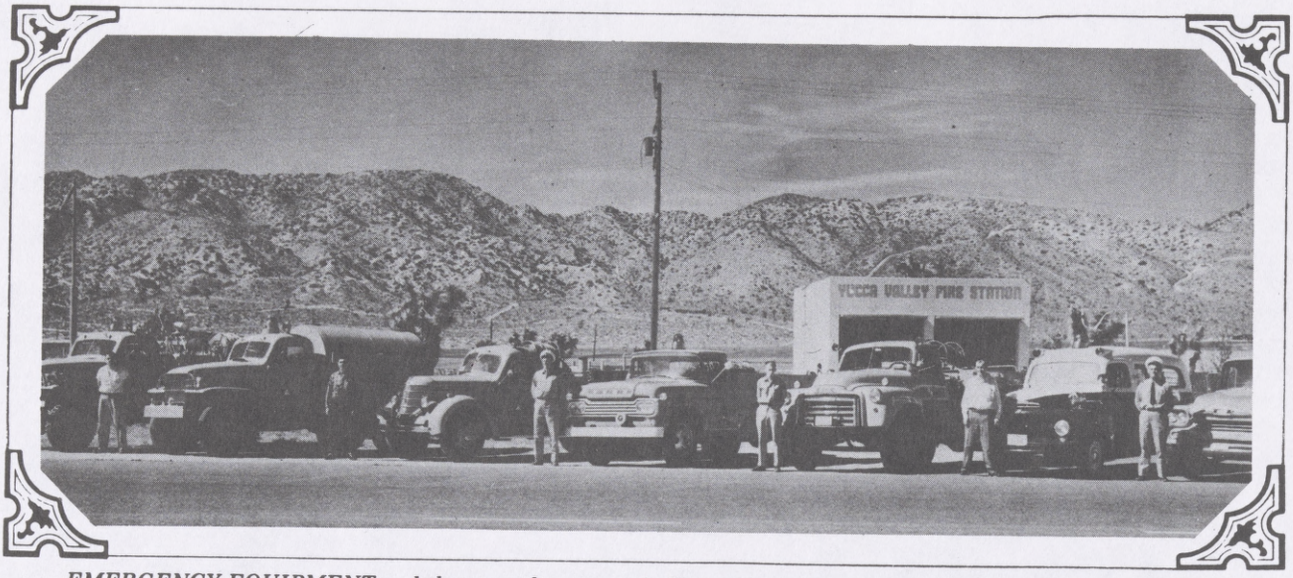
It wasn't too long before Fire Station No. 1 was a reality. Not when you had townspeople who were more than willing to volunteer their labor and build the station, all bright and shiny, from the ground up. Men who didn't just talk, but who gave their time, skills and the sweat of their brows for the benefit of their community. Men like Eddie Garver, Clay Tunstall, Woody Wilson, Ron Webb, Hap Rigby, John Arch, Ralph Kingston, Edwin Kruder, Kenn Witting, John List, Bill Pace, Jim O'Connor, Chick Ristine, Everett Taylor, Billy Royal, Paul Perrin, Ernie Peters, Howard Heard, Paul Griswold, Freddie Marble, Little Beaver and John Kee. Any time materials were running short Jule Boldizsar and Odis Ray reached in their pockets and supplied the "grease" to keep the wheels moving.

At the time of the play and the fund-raising push A.J. LeFever and Dr. John Bendall had replaced Tonkin and Stout on the Board of Commissioners.

Clay Tunstall was Volunteer Fire Chief; Boldizsar, Assistant Chief; Ed Hardesty, Captain; and Don Lewin, Advisory Captain and Instructor.

Volunteer Firemen included Paul Griswold, Fred Tunstall, Don Taylor, Chet Lemke, Grant Redden, Dean Evans, Harvey Odgers, Gordon Barth, Ralph Anderson, Chick Ristine, Eddie Kruder, Ralph Kingston, Johnnie Arch, Earl Rising, Roy Jewett, Roy H. Paul, Richard Harmon, Ernie Peters, Kenn Witting, David Erfurt, Jimmy O'Connor, Glenn Harper, Everett Taylor, Bill Lace, Jack Barrett, A.W. Holt, Jr., Keith Hagan, Clyde Barth, Glen Hammett, Bill Pace, Charlie Watkins, Father Smith, Eddie Garver, Harold Westcott, Lee Cotton, Ken Horton, Lionel Plasse and Lou Urmston.

The next item needed was a resuscitator. Without hesitation Vi Humphreyville, Dorothy Tunstall and Dorrine Gerth started another fund-raising campaign and collected a sufficient amount of money to purchase the resusciators, which was presented inthe memory of Vi's late husband, Tom.



EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT and the men who operate it Circa 1958 — shown L to R - Roland Webb, Hap Rigby, Edwin Kruder, Jim O'Connor, Odis Ray and Chief Harry Brissenden.

The Yucca Valley Lions Club, under the direction of Paul Perrin, president, sponsored the fund-raising campaign that enabled the town to purchase a much-needed ambulance in the spring of 1958. The hard-working Lions were greatly assisted by their wives — the Dandee-Lions. After the ambulance was purchased it was turned over to the district for $1. The very welcome ambulance was operated by the volunteer firemen.

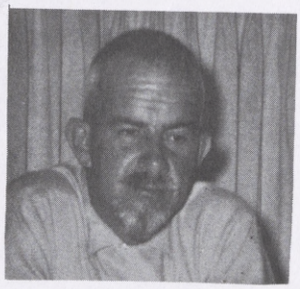
Fire Station No. 1 was operating smoothly and was a comfort to the people but the town kept growing toward the east and the need for a second fire station was admitted. Charlie Watkins and his wife, Joan, donated a parcel of land on the highway just west of Joshua Lane. There a newer, larger Fire Station No. 2 was built. It is the present headquarters station. In 1969, the original Station No. 1, now outmoded, was closed down and the property reverted back to Bill Pace.

Harry Brissenden was hired as the Fire Chief, receiving partial pay, thus becoming the first paid Chief. He served from 1959 to 1967. His Assistant Chief was David Harmon. The first district now encompassed 22 sections of land.

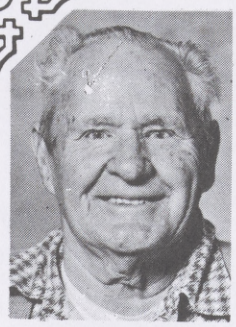
THE MEN of the present-day Yucca Valley Fire Department. Proud to serve Yucca Valley and make it a better, safer place to live.

BACK ROW, from left, Steve Darr, John Swenson, John Licher, Rick Denison, Roger Picard and Dave Garry.

FRONT ROW, from left, Ed Thornton, Bob Diehl, Henry Scott, Gary Pohlman, Mike Fagan, Steve Sipes and Don Westfall. Not in picture: Jerry Merriam, Kim Bliss, Gerry Bradshaw, Gary Benedict and Mike Nelson. — May 1984.



William Harmon—Volunteer



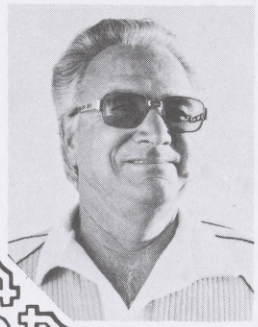
Clay Tunstall
First Fire Chief

Bob Stephenson

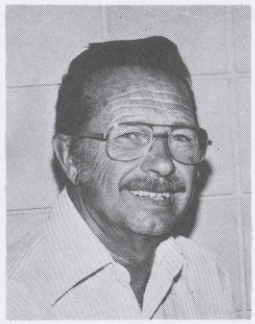
Chief Harry Brissenden

Asst. Chief David Harman

Everett Taylor

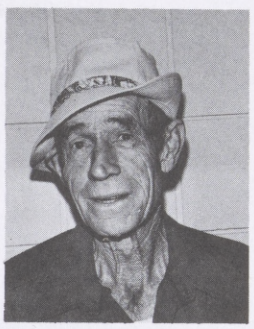


Ralph Kingston

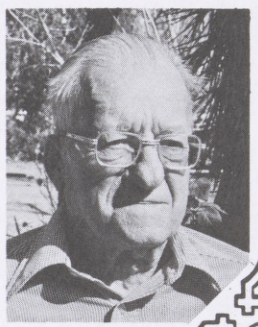


Bob Stephenson

Jules Boldiszar



Paul Griswold



Art LeFever

William Cook

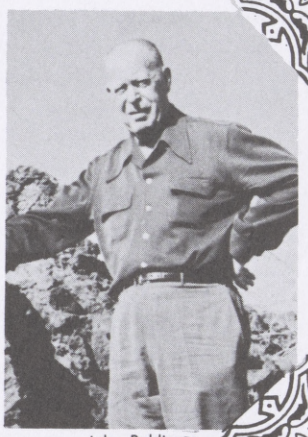
Chief Wm. Cook

Odis Ray continued as board chairman and Ed Hardesty and E.E. Boyd replaced Clay Tunstall and Dr. Bendall as commissioners. By this time a complete training program had been set up and, among the commissioners with ambulance driving and Advanced Red Cross Training were Ray, LeFever, and Hardesty. Boyd was in charge of the Ambulance Division.

The firemen (all still volunteers) who had similar ambulance and Advanced Red Cross Training were Ralph Kingston, Gordon Barth, Everett Taylor, Jack Weaver, Robert Durant, Al Furton and Roland (Ron) Webb. Other volunteer firemen were Paul Griswold, Daniel Pekarovich, Jr., W.T. Harmon, Jr., Raymond Royal, L.A. McCullock, Jack D. Bottorff, William F. Greathouse, Woody Wilson, Thomas H. Green, John G. Kee, Jr., Harold Rigby, Ray Sumner, Al Young, Isidor D. Vannozzi, William M. Adams and Morgan Reche.

Chief Brissenden planned many unannounced School Fire Drills to get the children used to acting in an emergency. One day, in a surprise drill (even the principal was surprised) the Yucca Valley Elementary School evacuated the students, teachers and administrative staff in a flat 27 seconds! The Fire Department sent out twelve volunteer firemen and three pieces of equipment and arrived at the school in three minutes!

By now the balls were an institution in the still-



Jule Boldizsar

Al Anderson

young town and the 11th Annual Firemen's Ball held September 10, 1960, featured the always popular Firehouse Five Plus Two. All money raised went into the Rescue Equipment Fund.

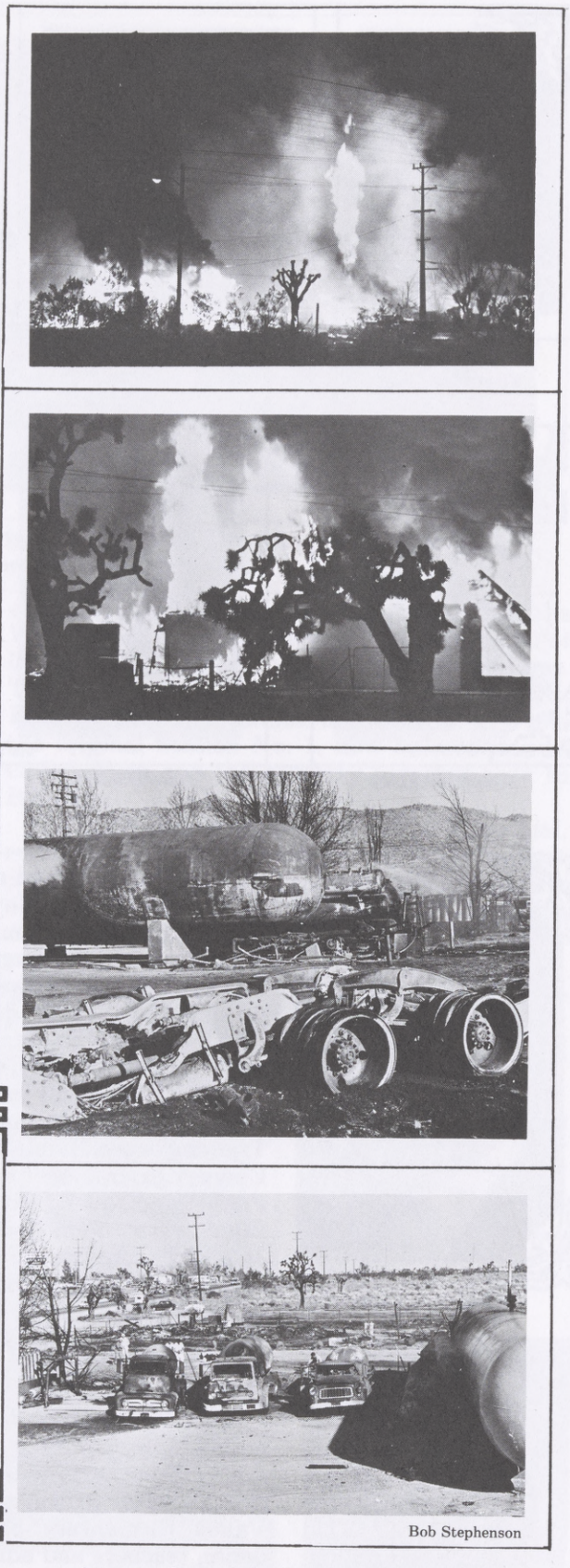
By the time William A. Cooke, Jr., had replaced the retiring Harry Brissenden as Fire Chief, most of the firemen were employees, not volunteers. The three oldest employees, in terms of service, are Hank Scott, now an Engineer, who started in 1964; Jerry Merriam, a Captain, who started in 1966; and Charles Hollier, Battalion Chief, who started in 1968.

Many of the firemen attend the Fire Science courses at Chaffey College and College of the Desert. In 1976, two Federal Government Grants set up the Paramedics Program for the Yucca Valley Fire Department. Grants of $43,000 and $27,000 paid for the training and equipment for the vital program. How many balls would the old-timers have to give to match that? The end result is Yucca Valley's life saving services are the best to be found anywhere.

The department's "finest hour" came in February, 1970, when, under the direction of Chief Cooke, it fought and put out the Uni-Gas propane fire after a delivery truck exploded. The firefighters were able to keep the large underground storage tank cooled down enough (despite the terrific heat of the fire) so it did not explode, thereby saving a large portion of the town from destruction.

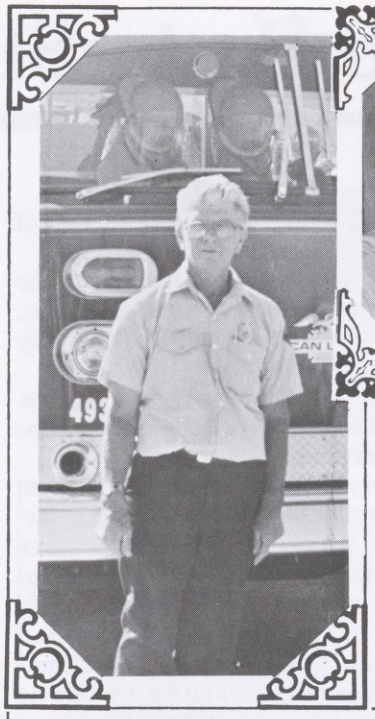
As the area developed additional sections of land were annexed to the district, so, naturally, another station was needed. Harold and Cathleen Reed donated land at the corner of Avalon and Aberdeen in Yucca Mesa. A new station was built and ready for occupancy in 1974. It became Station No. 2 and the headquarters station became Station No. 1.

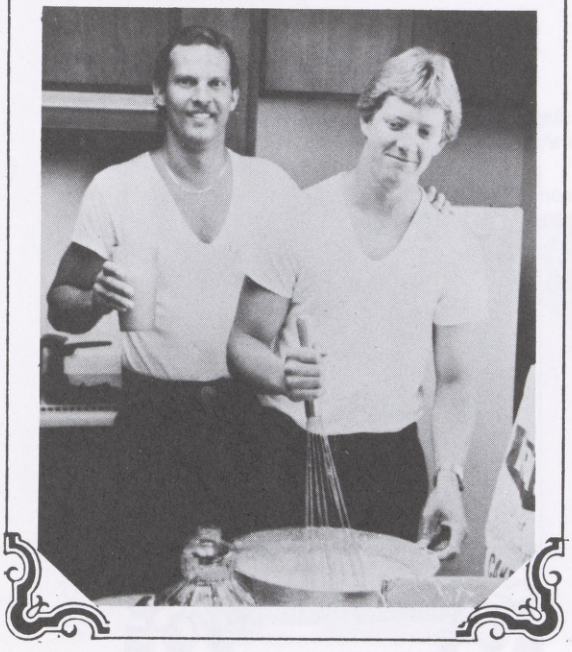
Bob Stephenson



Bob Stephenson

ABOVE — Picture of the Unigas outlet before the fire. Right top to bottom, shots of the destructive fire and the devastation shown the morning after.





Today, Fire Chief Clarence L. Gish, supervises the personnel of thirty paid firemen and ten volunteers at the main station in Yucca Valley and the Yucca Mesa station. The district has filled out to 52 square miles.

Fire Department equipment includes four Class A fire trucks, two fully-equipped ambulances and two water tenders. There are approximately 1,350 fire hydrants (all marked on maps) in the district — with more being installed as we continue to grow.

Clay Tunstall is retired and still lives in Yucca Valley; Harry Brissenden passed away in 1983; and Bill Cooke still lives in Yucca Valley.

The Yucca Valley Fire Department participates with all other fire fighting departments in the Morongo Basin in a Mutual Aid Program for emergencies. It is also active in community services by offering classes in CPR and physical fitness and in showing films and giving demonstrations. It also schedules regular Blood Pressure Reading Days.

Most people agree that it's very nice and comforting to have a professional fire department, but the present-day crew is ever-mindful of the debt of gratitude owed to all those volunteers and boosters who really did sacrifice time, money and labor to create (for the love of a town) the department that was turned over to them. ■

Counter-clockwise — starting from top right:

PRESENT Chief Clarence Gish

Hank Scott, who received a 20-year pin for dedicated service.

ANNUAL Pancake Breakfast benefiting Fire Fighters Association — John Swenson and Gary Benedict, Culinary Artists for the Fire Dept. Breakfasts.

Y.V. FIRE STATION — Mr. Carpenter, Otis Ray, Fire Commissioner Forest Baxter, Francis Wood, Magda Lawson, County Supervisor, Paul Perrin, Mr. Hanft, representing Red Cross.

Law And Order • Morongo Basin Style •

Naturally, Charlie Reche comes to mind as the Morongo Basin area's first lawman in the earlier years of this century. Then, in 1930, Gustavis "Gus" Seely became the first appointed officer for the vast and still remote territory. He was both Constable and Deputy Sheriff, the latter being a non-salaried commission at the time. He was on call 24-hours a day.

Harry Lawton

Marguerite Inderweische

CHARLIE RECHE, 1910, the area's first law man.

Orville J. "Jack" Cones and his wife, Clara, had homesteaded in Twentynine Palms in 1928. A World War I veteran, Jack had been seriously wounded in combat and had been left with a bad leg and foot—but that didn't slow him down a bit. In 1932 he took over Seely's duties and, in the next 28 years, he became one of the best liked and most admired law officers in the county. His starting salary was $25 a month. He had his own plane and in those first years in office he flew it all over his territory at his own expense. Of course his nickname was "The Flying Constable."

He did some of his patrolling by car and by horse, but mostly he flew. Taking to the air at a moment's notice, he assisted in all the Basin's search and rescue operations; he actually landed his airplane on the desert roads and helped people stranded in balky cars get underway once more; he would make "fly-bys" over mines and cabins and give a wig-wag "hello" to the more remote residents; and, in his happiest trips of all, he would fly in presents and candy to the far-off ranch children at both Christmas and Easter.

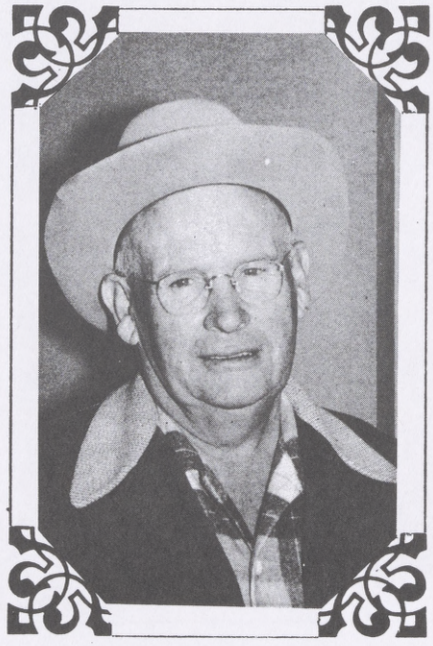
He knew, literally, everyone who lived in the Morongo Basin in those earlier years and, later, he made it a point to get acquainted with as many of the "new folks" as he could.

He voluntarily drove the local ambulance, transporting many a sick or injured person to the hospital in San Bernardino.

He was, by his very nature, a legendary man; and one of his legendary (and typical) accomplishments took place when a Twentynine Palms homesteader shot and killed a woman and then holed up in his cabin. The Deputy Sheriffs called to the scene had his cabin surrounded and were about to move in when Jack appeared and took over. He asked the Deputies to wait while he went in and talked to the man, whom he knew. Inside, he did talk, politely asked for and received the man's gun and they walked out. He was an early-day, calm-talking, one man SWAT Team!

On February 7, 1960, an era came to an end with Jack's death. It was a Sunday and he and Orville Jones, Safety Engineer from the Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, had flown into the Yucca Valley Airport in Jack's well-recognized Piper Cub. They visited with Yucca Valley Fire Chief Harry Brissenden, John Arch and many other flying aficionados enjoying the perfect weather day. Then the pair got back into the plane for the return flight. During the take-off

THE Flying Constable — Jack Cones.



Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office

SHERIFF Frank Bland

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

1967 — Yucca Valley's. Installed Robert Nordyke as Captain and Val Jones as Secretary-Treasurer. January 11, 1967 at Copper Room. Outgoing Officers are Jim Couzens, Captain, Charles Haynie, Secretary-Treasurer.
BACK ROW — Left to right: Ernie Sall, Larry Allison, Ray Atherson, Allen Weltz, Dr. Sterling Butler, Thomas Proctor, James Ishmael, James Goodman, Corky Kee, Charles Haynie.
FRONT ROW — Jim Couzens, Robert Nordyke, Lt. Joseph Karr of 29 Palms Sheriff Substation, Sheriff Frank Bland, Inspector Floyd Tidwell, Val Jones, Jack Volcic. Goodman and Proctor were sworn in as new members by Sheriff Bland. During the evening Ed Arnal talked on Indians of Arizona.

JACK CONES with his ever-present Piper Cub — Circa 1958.

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

1981 — Sheriff Floyd Tidwell giving Ernie Sall a plaque for long service in the Search & Rescue. Ernie retired that night.

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

SEARCH and Rescue Installation — January, 1974.
BACK ROW — Woodring, Statz, Rhoads, Ferkles.
FRONT ROW — Hughes, Krafft, Cubitt, Bland, Wilson.

the plane banked sharply, the motor stalled and the Piper Cub crashed to earth. Brissenden was the first to reach the crash site. He pulled Jones, who was critically injured but did live, from the plane. Thanks to the Fire Chief's quick actions there was no fire. However, it took a wrecking bar to extricate Jack from the plane's wreckage. He died en route to the Ince Hospital, Twentynine Palms.

The entire Morongo Basin, realizing it had lost a wonderful friend, deeply mourned his death.

Tom Mooney was the first full-time Deputy Sheriff to be assigned to the Morongo Basin, working out of Twentynine Palms. That was in June, 1952. He was joined by Deputy Bob Woods in 1953, and Deputy Leo Lewis in 1954. When San Bernardino County Sheriff Frank Bland took office in 1955, "Doc" Martin became the first Deputy Sheriff to be assigned to Yucca Valley.

Ron Webb became the Resident deputy for Yucca Valley in 1957. In the old-time tradition, he was on call 24-hours a day. His allotted territory covered Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, Pioneertown, Landers, Johnson Valley and Morongo Valley, an area of approximately 640 square miles.

Deputy Webb was assisted by nine members of the Sheriff's Reserve Unit. They were James O'Connor, George Balazs, David Hansen, Ernest Peters, Joel Hammett, Roger Melanson and Larry Gray, of Yucca Valley; Harold Rigby, of Morongo Valley; and Howard "Red" Davidson, of Pioneertown.

1961. Yucca Valley Sheriff's Rangers Search and Rescue group. Front row, left to right: Clifford Endeman, Roger Melanson, William J. Farris. Standing, left to right: Charles P. Haynie, William P. Morrison, Charles Kee, Roy S. Smith, R. Sterling Butler, John L. Kee, Robert Howell, Roy Carter, Newlin Landers, Ralph Ewing.

The Yucca Valley Rangers, headed by John Kee, were used in search and rescue missions; and four local pilots volunteered their services and placed their planes at Webb's disposal. They were Jule Boldizsar, Myrle Ruple, John Arch and Ray Bennett.

In 1959, a small office was opened in the Plaza by the Sheriff's Department. (Editor's Note: Actually, it shared an office. The full office belonged to the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce which gave free rent and space to the Sheriff's Department, the County Building Inspector, the Hi-Desert Star and the Yucca Valley Post Office after it burned down. No visitor to that office could ever say he didn't know what was going on in town!)

In these pleasant surroundings Truman Clifford was the Deputy Sheriff. He was replaced by Deputy Jo Karr in that post. Roger Melanson replaced Karr in May, 1960. Karr returned to the Basin years later as a Captain in command of the Twentynine Palms Sub-station.

The Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office and Melanson moved into new quarters on Acoma Trail in 1961. The following year he was joined by a second Deputy—Ed Baker. Later, Deputy Ted Dykes joined them.

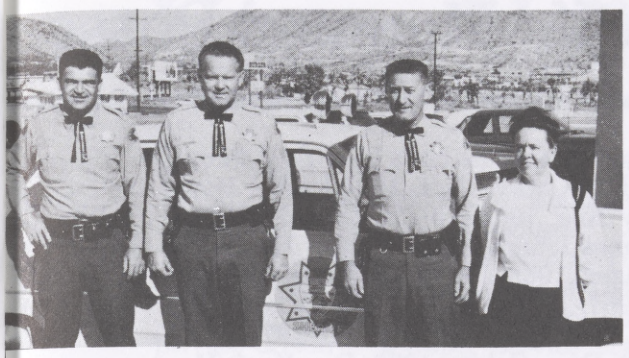
Still another move took place for the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office when it acquired the most spacious quarters up to that time on Church Street. Opening on March 1, 1966, under the supervision of Sgt. Louis Richenberger, it boasted a four man staff: Deputies Ted Dykes, Ed Burke, Rudy Likens and Gene Rogers. Pearl Barden was the Deputy Clerk. Detectives Roger Melanson and Robert Dunham were also assigned to the local office. In August of that year Sgt. Richard R. Rhoads replaced Richenberger as supervisor.

The Sheriffs office has recently moved from their location in Yucca Valley, just west of the Ideal Mall. This was the former home and workshop of Roy Jewett, Famous as the Desert lampmaker.

Under Capt. E.E. Crawford, commander of the Twentynine Palms Sheriff's Sub-station, and Lt. R. Dean Knadler, supervisor of the Yucca Valley Office, there were (counting sergeants, detectives, deputies and limited duty deputies) thirty-five law officers maintaining the peace in the area. There were also three deputy clerks in the offices. In addition, the Sheriff's Reserve Units, the Yucca Valley Rangers and the Morongo Basin Sheriff's Mounted Posse stood ready to give assistance at any time.

Lt. Rhoads and Deputy Clerk Barden have retired and Detective Melanson is on disability sick leave. All are still living in the Yucca Valley area.

The Sheriff's Sub-station is now moved and headquartered in the new County Complex in Joshua Tree, the personnel roster will be enlarged and will grow with the burgeoning area. Both the population growth and the additional law enforcement coverage is something old Charlie Reche and Flying Constable Cones would say was a darn good idea. ■

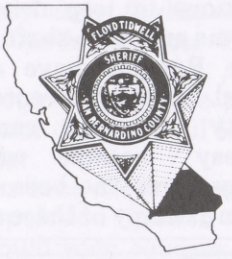


1955. Staff of the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, left to right: Ed Burke, Sgt. Richard R. Rhoads, Supervisor of Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, Ted Dykes and Pearl Barden, Deputy Clerk.

ABOVE — The people who served Yucca Valley and the Morongo Basin in 1967. They are, left to right: Sgt. Richard Rhoads, Deputies Elwood Haas, A.C. James, Jr., Cyril J. Couzens, B.E. Pope, Capt. Joseph M. Karr, Area Commander and Clerk Pearl Barden.

1958. Ambulance drivers' class in first aid and handling ambulance patients. Front row, left to right: Ben Carpenter, Red Cross Instructor; C.R. Loy, Red Cross Instructor from the 29 Palms Marine Base; Paul Perrin. Center row, left to right: Red David Hanson, Odis Ray, Roger Melanson, Ralph Kingston, Woody Wilson, Sam Hines, Ed Boyd, Ronnie Webb. Back row, left to right: Gordon Barth, Floyd Peters, Hap Rigley, Ernie Peters, Art LeFever, Ed Hardesty, Jimmie O'Connor.

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT



SHERIFF FLOYD TIDWELL installing 1981 Officers. Com. Rocky S. Salciccioli, Com. Gordon Atherton, Sec./Tres. Bob Dunn, Training Officer C.J. Glover.

THE LAST location of the Yucca Valley Sheriff Station. HEADQUARTERS is now in Joshua Tree in the County Complex.

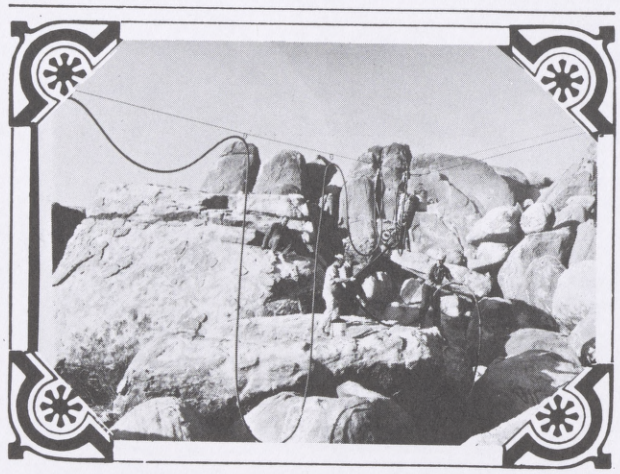
Yucca Valley Rangers..Sheriffs Mounted Posse

The Yucca Valley Rangers, in keeping with the true "Spirit of the West," started as a horse group. It was formally organized in September, 1955, with the original membership consisting of John Kee, Dr., Charlie Kee, Roy Kee, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Perrin, Mr. and Mrs. Belcher, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Brownell and Mr. and Mrs. Kenny. The women in the group were installed as deputies.

Through the years the Yucca Valley Rangers' Search and Rescue Unit has served well the community and the whole desert area. As part of their volunteer duties they search for all people reported lost or missing in the desert, rescue and return those lost people when found, administer first aid when needed, search for evidence in connection with crimes, assist the Sheriff's Department during floods and other natural disasters and perform crowd-control and traffic-control duties during special events at Yucca Valley High School and at community observances such as the Easter Sunrise Services at Desert Christ Park and the Grubstakes Days Parade.

They also participate in monthly practice and training sessions in which they receive instructions in jeep driving, tracking, first aid, firearms and mine-shaft rescue.

The Rangers have also actively sponsored special sporting events, benefit movies, community clean-up campaigns, picnics, etc. "Jonesy" became well-known to many a youngster as the boss of the motorized chuck-wagon at many of these events.



SEARCH & RESCUE at work — Four shown here are Charlie Kee, Jim Grover, Corky Kee, Gordon Etherton.

The Rangers' Captains have been Paul Perrin, 1955-56; John "Corky" Kee, 1957-58; Ed Boyd, 1959; Corky Kee, 1960; Dr. R. Sterling Butler, 1961-62; James Ishmael, 1963; Corky Kee, 1964; Donald Dougan, 1965; Jim Couzens, 1966; Robert Nordyke, 1967; Jack Volcic, 1968; Robert Nordyke, 1969; Lee Edge, 1970; Bill Iliff, 1971; Jerry Ducey, 1972; Dave Cubitt, 1973; Don Kraft/Hap Harlow, 1976; Norman Cloutier, 1977; Jerry Woodring, 1978; Dave Cubitt, 1979; and John Mahany, 1980.

Four Yucca Valley Rangers took the College of the Desert course on rock climbing and rock rescue in 1978. They were Jerry Woodring, John Mahany, George Marshall and Rod Weidner. The following year the Rangers formed a Rock Team for the Search and Rescue Unit. Original members of the Rock Team were Bill Commerford, C.J. Glover, Bruce Willingham, Roger Cloutier, Jerry Woodring, Steve Shafer, John Mahany and Rod Weidner. Rick Anderson, Joshua Tree National Monument Superintendent, was not a member of the Yucca Valley Rangers but was a member of the Rock Team.

As the Rangers unit grew in size it turned more and more to mechanized transportation. But it was also acknowledged that there would always be a need for the man on a horse. With this very much in mind, Sheriff Frank Bland instituted the new Morongo Basin Sheriff's Mounted Posse and presented Donald B. McDowell with his Captain's bars on June 16, 1966.

Founding year members of the Posse were Sheriff's Detective Roger Melanson, Rudolfo Arce, Karl Arnold, Jr., Travis Blocker, Jamie Cain, T.A. Candelario, Darwin Cline, Rex Combs, David Coyner, Howard Davidson, Richard Hedrick, George Hostler, John Hulbert, Fred Johnson, Charles A. Kee, Roy Kee, Rudy Meier, Raymond Milsted, Truman Peet, Ira Phillipps, Duane Pierce, Darrell Pitts, Tom Riggs, Hugh Shaffer, Albert Van Diver, Howard D. Vore, Eugene Weslow and John Zoller.

The Posse performed the same duties as the Rangers, plus its members rode in many mountain and desert area parades and participated in the very grueling re-enactment of the Willie Boy posse tracking. ■

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Remember when the Yucca Valley Rangers played the Harlem Clowns (a unit of the Harlem Globetrotters)? It was October, 1960. Forget the score. But never forget that it was Roger Melanson, Dr. R. Sterling Butler, Charlie Haynie, Tony Petruzziello, Bill Morrison, Bill Mowbray, Bob Howell, Ray Smith, Newlin Landers and Roy Carter who volunteered for the game of their lives. ■

Yucca Valley Sky Corral

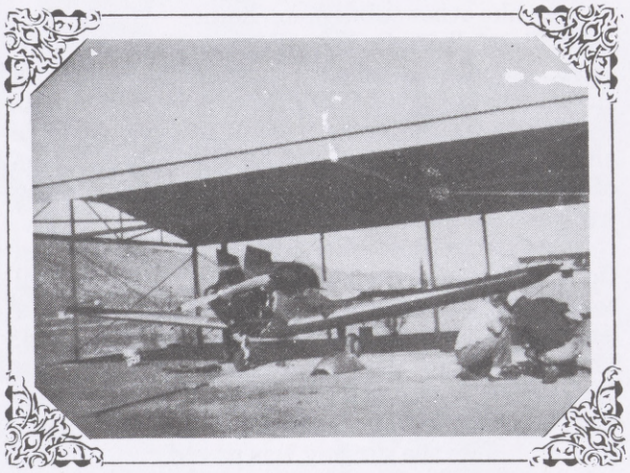
Jule and Val Boldizsar and their two daughters, Judy and Sherry, moved to Yucca Valley in the spring of 1947. Jule set right to work building his private dream — a Super Service Station to accommodate both aircraft and automobiles — and the Yucca Valley Sky Corral was born. He cleared and graded a 3,000 foot dirt landing strip north of the highway. His station, the best tradition, was built on the highway with the cars being serviced in front and the planes in the back of the building. At the west end of his highway frontage he built his beautiful native rock home. Later he filled in the space between his home and the Shell Station with the Sands Motel and a fine stand of shade trees.

Jule, an inveterate flyer himself, quickly attracted other local and soon-to-be-local pilots to his airstrip. That first happy group was called the Yucca Valley Cactus Hoppers.

LOGO for Yucca Valley's first flying club — 1964.

Very shortly private flying clubs from all points of the compass were "dropping in" at the Yucca Valley Sky Corral on Saturdays and Sundays. They would leave their planes on the airstrip, troop across the highway to Ray's Cafe for a delicious house-specialty breakfast of Swedish pancakes and lingonberry jam as prepared by Vi Ray's mother, Gussie. When they had eaten their fill (sometimes two and three irresistible orders apiece) they returned to the airstrip and swapped stories with Jule and the other pilots. Then they would get in their planes and fly off, promising to return often — and they did.

The Sky Corral was a very busy place during the late 1940's and early 1950's when the airstrip was much used by television and movie stars and production crews enroute to Pioneertown. While the films were being shot, their planes, delivering personnel and some light equipment, would fly in and out every day for weeks at a time. Jule's telephone was the message center and exchange between the Hollywood studios and the on-the-set producers.



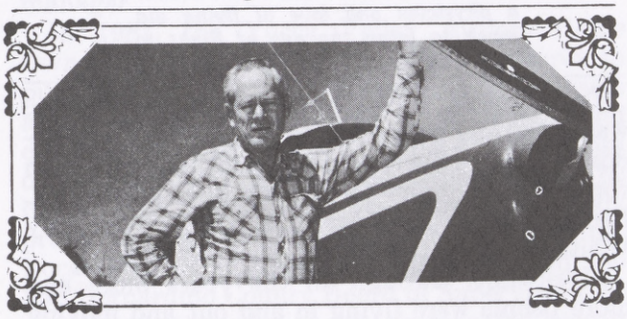
FIRST hangar built at Yucca Valley Sky Corral in 1948.

According to Jule, there have been, on occasion, two twin-engine Douglas DC 3's and a twin-engine Beechcraft D-18-S on that small field at the same time. The very early flights were made by famed United Airlines pilot, Paul Mantz.

Jule was a flight instructor at the time and, over the years, added several dozen joyful local flyers to the wild, blue yonder.

By the mid-50's progress took its toll and it became apparent that population growth and developing subdivisions would soon squeeze out the little airstrip.

Dr. John Bendall was one of the local pilots who wanted to keep an airport in the community. So, in 1957, he built the present-day Yucca Valley Airport, located east of Old Woman Springs Road and south of his former home at Warren's Well. He was living there at the time, of course.



DR. JOHN BENDALL, original builder of Yucca Valley's present airport. Dr. Bendall passed away Sept. 30, 1984.

He designed the airport for his use and for the other local flyers. Those who bought lots and built homes along the runway (including Jule and Val) taxi their planes from the main runway right into their own private hangars at the rear of the houses. The fronts of the houses open onto the streets like other subdivision homes.

Dr. Bendall originally built a 2,700 foot dirt airstrip, installed a gasoline pumping service and runway lighting. The Copper Room Restaurant was built for the benefit of all the townspeople and visitors, but especially for the airborne. One of the first permanent signs to be installed in the bar was "Flying Is Spoken Here."

In the early 1960's Norm Essig, Art Miller and Bob Potter, after making arrangements with all concerned, extended the runway to the east to a length of 4,200 feet. The runway was then paved. They still laugh about the poor Copper Room bartenders who had to run, frantically take down all the glasses and wash them every time a plane took off before the runway was paved.

Being a medical man with a growing practice, Dr. Bendall could not afford the time to operate an airport, too, so he regretfully sold it to a group of businessmen from Redondo Beach. They planned to operate the airport and build an airtel for visiting and vacationing flyers. It was a good idea but their plans were not completed.

DR. JOHN BENDALL, whose skill as a physician and love of flying did much to bring the age of flight to Yucca Valley.

Dr. Bendall, along with Essig and Miller, wanted to buy back the airport. However, the Redondo Beach owners sold it to another local group comprised of Emory Stromberg, Mike Arrasmith, Leon Selzer and Dan Harrison. In later years Ray White took over the Yucca Valley Airport.

Meanwhile, through all the years more and more people were flying in and out and moving next to the airport. The roster of local pilots included (naturally) Jule, Dr. Bendall, Essig,

ABOVE, Jules Boldizsar, one of Yucca Valley's strongest boosters.

BELOW, Val and Jules Boldizsar around 1949 when Sky Corral and the Sands Motel were under their direction.

Stromberg, Glenn and Lil Hammett, Clyde Gilbert, Robert Shoenleber, Bob Roberts, Arrasmith, Potter, Johnny Arch, Myrl Ruple, Doug and Vonda Carlson, Miller, Jerry Kindseth, Ross Simpson, Cy Dieter, Al Peters, Ray Royal, Ralph and Dottie Kingston, V. Ray Bennett, Bill Hanson and Louis and Garnet Stockton.

Going back a bit, on Oct. 16, 1957, at a dinner given by the Hammetts at the Copper Room, those assembled decided to form an air club. They couldn't decide on a suitable name (having outgrown the Cactus Hoppers) but they elected Ruple the Civilian 4-Star General; Jule, Commander in Chief; Lil Hammett, 1st Vice President In Charge of Keeping Things Humming; Bill Riesen, 2nd Vice President, Resident General Mechanic and Flunky; Blanche Barrett, Secretary-Treasurer; Hammett, Dispatcher; and Eunice Ruple, Rosemary Riesen, Val, Lil and Blanche as the Welcoming Committee. Dues collected that night at 1¢ apiece were 9¢.

And still the visiting pilots flew into the airport in ever-increasing numbers. One Sunday in 1961, some sort of a record for a small airport was established when 86 transient aircraft landed in one day in addition to the regulars' flights being logged.

THE YUCCA VALLEY AIRPORT has played a big part in the development of the area. Shown left to right in 1960, at the opening of the Sky Harbor Subdivision, are Ben Gage, Mr. Tanner, President of Air Pony, Art Miller, Casey Rogers, John Haskell, Elsinore Machris and Harold Brown, then President of the Chamber of Commerce. Many real estate clients have found their way through the Yucca Valley Airport.

From 1962 to 1965, the flying members of the Yucca Valley Lions Club, assisted by Essig and Miller, voluntarily conducted the Flight For The Blind feature during Grubstake Days weekends. Those who bought tickets were flown over the Joshua Tree National Monument and around the Morongo Basin. All proceeds went to the Lions Club "Sight For The Blind" program.

The Flying Grandfathers, organized by aviation pioneer, Wally Timm, met monthly at the Copper Room and included in its far-from-creaking local membership such hot-shot pilots as Al LeFevre, Essig, Boldizsar, Schoenleber, Roberts and Hammett.

The local flying gentry were taking off for all parts foreign and domestic, also. One such adventure was the 11-day flight (just a short hop) in March, 1963, of a trio of Yucca Valley couples. They were the Hammetts, the Essigs and the Boldizsars. They flew to Silver Springs and Cypress Gardens, Florida; the New Orleans Mardi Gras; Nassau, in the Caribbean; and on to San Antonio, Texas, and the historic Alamo.

Typical of the kind of fun the flyers love to have was the Hangar Party given at Essig's hangar on Oct. 15, 1975. More than 250 guests crowded around to honor "Doc" and Evelyn Bendall and a trio of Yucca Valley birthday honorees — Mrs. Mabel Mellette, 92; Bill Pace, 82; and Al LeFevre, age not mentioned.

All five, plus the other guests, had a wonderful time at the party which was organized by Ann Murry and Phyllis Grubaugh. Joan Wilson was the emcee of the evening. Hal and Dottie Bahr manned the bar while Stockton cooked hamburgers. Both Ray's Cafe and Mario's donated food "to the good cause."

Food preparers and servers were Phyllis, Angela Spencer, Kay Hulten, Milt Murry, Jessie Overkirk, Mary Hugentugler, Elsie LeFevre, Shoenleber, Val and Jule, Garnett, Doris Bigman and Mary and Art Gerpheide. Musical entertainment was provided by Lanny Moffitt, Marilyn Steely and Leonard Malin.

Darlene and Bob Roberts hosted an early-morning breakfast the next day for the clean-up crew.

The start of a new phase in the life of the Yucca Valley Airport took place in 1973, when Hawk Industries Aircraft Division built their company facility. The firm, engaged in aviation research and development, is headed by Ernie Hauk, president; Walt Zerman, administrative manager; and Larry Stewart, operations manager.

In 1981, the Yucca Valley Airport Home Owners' Association started the procedures to purchase the airport corporation and its assets and form an airport district to administer and operate the Yucca Valley Airport. Only those owning property around the airport would be included in the district. The proposal was approved first by the petitioners, then by both the Local Agency Formation Commission and the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. In a very recent election the flying property owners voted to become a district and they, henceforth, are in charge. ■

Chamber of Commerce

Until a town has grown sufficiently in population and political influence to willingly attain cityhood and a regulated form of government, it usually must rely on the more informal (but, hopefully, practical) guidance and leadership of its chamber of commerce. Yucca Valley is no exception.

However, while it had the very good fortune to have many wise leaders and planners steering a steady course, there were a number of instances in the early years when enthusiasm became unbridled and plopped the chamber into some ticklish situations. Looking back, they now seem innocently hilarious, but at the time they left a wake of confused fear and baffled consternation.

None of these instances were "programmed" with cunning or malice aforethought. On the contrary, they grew out of a lack of knowledge and information. These were good, well-meaning people who seemed fated to learn each lesson the hard way.

For instance, there was the year the chamber hung a huge promotional Grubstake Days banner high up between two power poles flanking either side of the Twentynine Palms Highway. This was right in front of Dr. Richard Nahaas' former dental office on the west-end hill just before the Morongo Grade.

During the night the wind blew hard and it had also rained. The ropes got wet and stretched, allowing the banner to droop and lower its height. Back toward the center of town, no one noticed as they hurried into the Yucca Valley Coffee Shop for an early morning cup of coffee. None of the chamber boosters knew they were supposed to cut holes in the banner to let the wind blow through. But they found out!

All of a sudden there was a very loud "snap," a screech of brakes and they couldn't believe their eyes! The banner was completely wrapped around a big semi truck and the driver could not see a thing. Fortunately, there wasn't heavy traffic in those days and the driver was able to stop without damaging his rig. The damage was elsewhere on the street — the pull on the banner had snapped both power poles at ground level! Some days it just doesn't pay.

Another time, when Art Miller first arrived in town with his champion parade horse, Peavine's Golden Major, a chamber member arranged for the horse to be kept in a backyard with a barbed-wire fence! A lesson in the proper corraling and stabling of prize horse-flesh was quickly learned.

Then there was the first time the chamber engaged the Jalopy Races as a Grubstake Days attraction. Everything was running smoothly when a deputy sheriff showed up with a warrant. That was how certain chamber members learned about obtaining permits. San Bernardino County Sheriff Frank Bland was a close friend of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce (having eased the members out of earlier bloopers). He was called, informed of the situation and he rapidly ordered the issuance of the permit, thereby surprising the deputy who did not want to let such hardened criminals get away.

Still another incident was more like a Halloween prank than a deliberate flaunting of authority. In 1962 the chamber and most of the townspeople wanted to change the name of the main thoroughfare in the town.

Among many suggestions, Yucca Blvd. was selected. The chamber duly requested the name change but the County Board of Supervisors turned it down. Everyone was disappointed.

THE LATE Roy Rousch, Chamber President 1956-1959. It was his effort that led to incorporation of the Chamber of Commerce in 1951.

Shortly after, on a dark night, a number of the promoters were sitting around the Glen Restaurant commiserating with each other. Suddenly, they decided action was called for. Stencils, and cans of quick-drying black and white paint were obtained. They split up into two groups and soon every sign along the highway read, "Yucca Blvd." It was a short, happy victory because the county painted the signs back to the original Twentynine Palms Highway.

In all fairness to the past chamber boards and its hard-working members, these examples are really exceptions to the rule. Their accomplishments included full support of the creation of the Volunteer Fire Department and, later, Fire District; the fund-raising campaign for the first fire truck and ambulance; the fund-raising campaign for a hospital and the creation of that district; the house-and-street-numbering

project; the street-lighting project; the census; the Pioneer Pass Push; early-day studies of incorporation and cityhood possibilities; the sponsorship of a town newspaper; the encouragement of people and businesses to move in; the work to form the park and recreation district, build a park and promote schools; they also kept track of good and bad zoning and sent delegations of citizens to San Bernardino if not satisfied; worked with the Associated Chambers of Commerce and went to the Los Angeles Public Utilities Commission hearings to fight for lower utility rates; helped get a new Post Office builting; put in town signs at both the west and east ends; looked into the feasibility of cable television as regarded reception; cooperated with the Desert Beautification group; established a Wildflower Watch for the benefit of both residents and tourists; sponsored a curbs and gutter construction program on the highway; sponsored Grubstake Days; the Christmas Decorating Contest; co-sponsored the tumbleweed removal; promoted tourism and the town of Yucca Valley; and generally assisted the businessmen, merchants and townspeople in the more usual ways of a chamber.

Furthermore, these early-day chamber members (officers and troops) were operating on a shoe-string. They had no place at all to meet at first. They would gather around a couple of pick-up trucks parked on the highway, using the truck hoods as desks. Later Mort and Sam Rosenbaum, owners of Cabin Homes and Desert Builders' Emporium, gave the chamber a desk and phone to use — free. As soon as the chamber had enough members to cover it, it paid the phone bill itself. Sam also bought a copy of the Bureau of Land Management film of all Morongo Basin parcels which gave the names of all the property owners. He gave the film to the chamber for a mailing list.

The chamber itself was incorporated on December 10, 1951, after the diligent efforts of Roy Roush.

Right from the start, in 1948, the chamber accomplished a great deal and should be forgiven those few mistakes, especially since they almost always provided a retroactive laugh.

Typical of the businessman's-chamber member's spirit in those days was the way George Robinson, manager of Homestead Building Supplies, made his point in 1958. He got tired of hearing that there were no big businesses and/or payrolls in Yucca Valley. So, he went to the Bank of America and made arrangements. The next payday his employees were paid in silver dollars. The following week they received their pay in $2.00 bills. There couldn't have been any doubters left that Robinson had an $8,500.00 payroll per week as the town was awash with silver and $2.00 bills.

Glen Gaines, Paul Neilson and Paul Lytell were three of Homestead's carpenters and Paul Hammett painted all the signs and designed the now well known outhouse with TV antenna on the roof which Homestead incorporated as its logo in 1956.

Both the chamber and its representative businesses were happily impressed with Yucca Valley's development. In the 1959 issue of the Grubstake Days brochure, California Water and Telephone Company (which served the Hi-Desert) proudly advertised itself as "an independent, locally-managed telephone company whose properties have grown more rapidly than those of any comparable company in America."■

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When the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1948, Dr. Thomas B. Sowell was elected president. He resigned in July, 1949, and was was replaced by J.R. Shales until the next election.

In the following list of presidents it will be seen that some men served more than one term of office. Also, when a president had started his term and, for various personal reasons, had to step down, another replaced him. Therefore, there are more names listed for some of the years.

Art Katje was the first full-term president for the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce, serving from 1949-1950. He was followed by Jule Boldizsar, 1950-1951; Archie LeFever, 1951-1953; Floyd J. Peters, 1953-1954; Emery Hanson, 1954-1955; Woody Vance, 1955-1956; Roy Roush, 1956-1959; Harold Brown, 1959-1960; Roy Roush, 1959-1960; Ken Bonser, 1959-1960; Harold Brown, 1960-1961; Ken Tornborg, 1961-1962; Norm Granger, 1962-1963; and Ed Rance, 1963-1964.

Bill Littleton served from 1964-1965; Jim Ishmael, 1965-1966; Ray Hapsburg, 1966-1967; Marv Wood, 1967-1968; Harry Logan, 1968-1969; Larry Fine, 1969-1970; Lanny Moffitt, 1970-1971; Ken Watts, 1971-1972; Carl Smelko, 1972-1973; Dominic Villani, 1973-1974; and Jack Harrington, 1974-1975.

Breaking the ice and a new precedent, Patty Schumacher was the first lady president, serving from 1975-1976. She was followed by John Uraine, 1976-1977; John Plavan, 1977-1978; Ted Fogel, 1978-1979; Frank Fleck, 1979-1980; Paul Carlisle, 1980; Bill Bryan, 1980-1981; Pete White, 1981-1982, Gary Hann, 1982-1983; and Keith Robbins, 1983-1984; and Hal Paradis, 1984-1985■

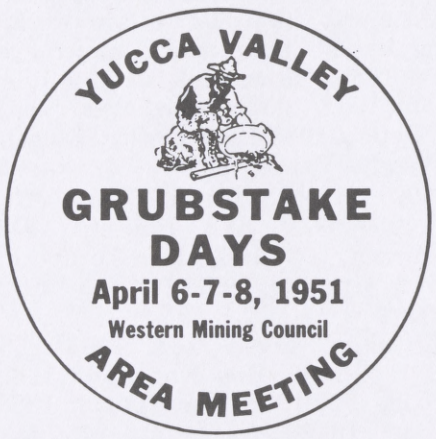
How To Celebrate A Town . . . . . .

There comes a time in the life of most young towns when it is felt that some sort of an annual celebration or special event would be beneficial to everyone. Yucca Valley came to that decision in 1950. Jule Boldizsar, a Chamber of Commerce officer, made a strong recommendation that the time was ripe for such a civic undertaking and his fellow directors and the townspeople agreed. They would hold a parade, sponsored by the Chamber.

That first year, 1950, they didn't have an official title for the event, but they certainly had a celebration — and a fine parade. Maybelle Royal was named the Queen of the parade. Kenn Witting, as the master of ceremonies, described each parade entrant, often with droll humor. The Yucca Valley Players entertained during the weekend.

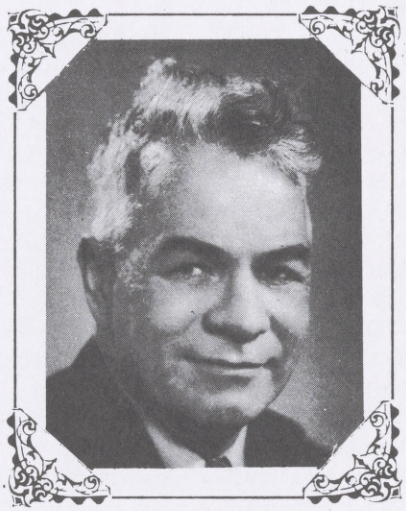
The Chamber also sponsored Maybelle Royal as its Queen Contestant for the National Orange Show, in San Bernardino. In addition, it sponsored and manned a booth at the Orange Show to publicize the town of Yucca Valley.

Everyone was well-pleased with all these activities and it was obvious that Yucca Valley was ready and eager to get more involved with a larger observance to come.



The following year J.P. Hall, then publisher of the California Mining Journal and a Yucca Valley property owner, made arrangements with the California Mining Council to hold its meeting here. The Chamber went into action and started planning its second town celebration which would be held in honor of the Council and the visiting miners. The Chamber also wanted to give recognition to the early mining background of the Morongo Basin. The community celebration was given the name of Grubstake Days.

CACTUS KATE, first Grubstake Queen — 1951.



J.P. HALL, Publisher of California Mining Journal. His effort brought the first Grubstakes Celebration to Yucca Valley.

Cactus Kate, in all her glory, was chosen as the first Grubstake Days Queen. Sheriff Frank Bland was the Parade Grand Marshal. The true flavor of the miners' lives was maintained in the special events which included Grubstake Pack-Loading Contests and Gold-Panning Contests (using real gold nuggets obtained courtesy of the Mining Council). Before the weekend was over everyone was panning for gold. The visiting miners thoroughly enjoyed themselves, Grubstake Days was acknowledged to be a huge success and a tradition was launched.

Grubstake Days

Maybelle Bautrin
1950

Sandra Dodder
1954

Donna Royal
1952

Diane Peters
1955

Judy Hammett
1953

IN THIS GALLERY of the past are shown some of the Pageantry of the Queen's selection and an array of the first Queens of Grubstake Days. Above, the Pageant of 1959. Seated is Queen Beverly Hoffman. Her Court, standing are, left to right: Edna Briggs, Midge Tunstall, Sandy Harmon, Tina English, Nancy Garver and Cheryl Hammett.

Marguerite Hardesty
1956

Gloria Allee
1957

Tina English
1958

Beverly Hoffman
1959

Judy Brown
1960

Marginia Ewing
1961

Mary Lou Holland
1962

Jule Boldizsar was in charge of that memorable first Grubstake Days. His main helpers (besides the ever-willing townspeople) were Archie Le Fever, Ole and Emory Hanson, Woody Vance, John Kee, Sr., Mrs. Harold Brown, Mrs. Lombardo and, of course, J.P. Hall.

In succeeding years Grubstake Days has grown larger and added many features, but the accent has always been western.

The earlier Queen Contests, which now also bestowed the "Miss Yucca Valley" title on the winner, were won by popular town vote.

Following Cactus Kate, the triumphant Queens were: Donna Evanoff Royal, 1952; Judy Hammett, '53; Sandra Peters Dudder, '54; Diane Peters, '55; Marguarite Schuller Hardesty, '56; Gloria Alee, '57; Tyna English, '58; Beverly Hoffman, '59; Judy Brown, '60; Marginia Ewing, '61; Mary Lou Holland, '62; Emily Tornborg, '63; Sharon Whelan, '64; Peggy Allison, '65; Charyla Bridges, '66; Beverly Vollaire, '67; Doreen Smith, '68; and Sally Rassmusson, '69.

Other Queens have been Melanie Melanson, '70; Susan Goodwin, '71; Barbie Cummins, '72; Suzy Lenhardt, '73; Debra Denbo, '74; Nancy Gerpheide, '75; Mary Ann Carpenter, '76; Jennifer Bransford, '77; Charice Lyman, '78; Kim Korcha, '79; Sid Haley, '80; Julie Pechstedt, '81; Amie Negron, '82; and Lori Keyes, '83.

For three of the earlier years running Laurel Martin, an artist in her own right, was in charge of the Miss Yucca Valley Contest and designed and made the costumes for the Queens and their

Courts. Famed for her artistic creations in leatherwork, she made matching soft leather outfits for the girls. Laurel also made matching outfits of denim with leather fringe trim and her very popular Sand Dabs — leather mocassins. One of the many friends of the Martins is Ross Carmichael, a Life photographer who took pictures of the girls in their costumes for that magazine.

Enthusiasm carried over to all the clubs and organizations as each entered beautifully and laboriously decorated floats for the parades. Most of the floats were built on flat-bed trucks but, whatever the vehicle, it was decorated from top to bottom.

dressed up for the occasion and only Cactus Kate was allowed to wear her own "best bib and tucker."

The Queen and Court made appearances on four television programs over local Hollywood TV stations and a great number of Hollywood-based radio stations during the week before Grubstake Days.

Harold Brown was able to arrange for this "saturation" schedule of promotion plugs through the auspices of Bob Purcell, former station manager of KTTV, Channel 11; and Radio Station KFWB. Earlier Queens captured the Publicity spotlight courtesy of Jack Renfro, a regular advertiser on KTTV and KTLA, Channel 5; and Radio Station KFI.

THE TALENTED Laurel Martin is shown on the left and in center photo. Her designs in leather and her organizational talent kept Laurel in charge of the Miss Yucca Valley contest for several years. Judy Hammett, Miss Yucca Valley 1953, is shown wearing one of Laurel Martin's creations.

In the very early Grubstake years two separate Soapbox Derbies were held on Acoma Trail but, apparently, a continuing effort couldn't get off the ground and they were dropped.

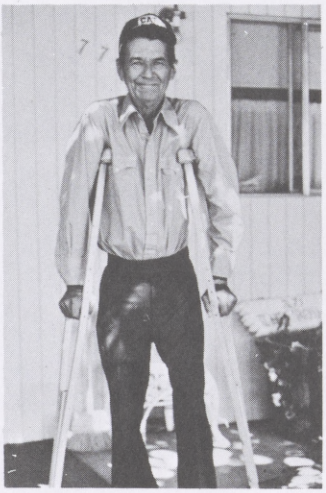
The first well-documented Grubstake Days was in 1957, thanks to the Chamber's own newspaper, The Desert Star. That was the year that Queen Gloria Alee and her Princesses, Diane Peters and Tyna English, were chosen by popular vote at the Teen Age Dance held at the Yucca Valley Community Clubhouse on April 3. Johnny Arch was the master of ceremonies and Jean Arch was in charge of the contest and the girls' appearances throughout the year. Everyone was all

Television Western Star Rex Allen appeared as a featured attraction of the 1957 Grubstake Days. He crowned the Queen at the Coronation Ball on Friday, May 17. Then, on Saturday night, he presented his own western show as a benefit for the Yucca Valley Community Church and its building fund for a youth center. The handsome Western actor was introduced to Yucca Valley by Luther Colvin and Art Miller.

That year the Parade Grand Marshal was Brig. Gen. T.G. McFarlane, commander of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base.

Joan Wilson

THE 1959 Midget Auto Races were a huge success. They were repeated in 1960-61 and '63. The race site was graded by Billy Royal and Dan Pekarovich at no cost to the sponsors.



BILLY ROYAL, a man for all occasions, never failed to offer his help.

1954 AND '55 were two years in which soap box derbies were held on the hill at Acoma Trail. Unfortunately, support for further derbies couldn't be mustered.

Francis Callahan sponsored Vicki Stratton and her "Downey Dolls" Girls Drill Team in the parade. The crack precision drill team, composed of young ladies all under fourteen, proved to be very popular. Following the parade Francis hosted them at luncheon in his restaurant, threw a swim party at Burnt Mountain Dude Ranch for his guests, returned for more food before their journey home. Callahan picked up the tab for all expenses.

An equestrian gymkhana was held on Saturday afternoon, featuring local horsemen and women, not to mention the junior division.

Sunday afternoon marked the first appearance of an exciting new attraction — the Midget Auto Races. Sometime before the big weekend John W. Fitzgerald, of Lawndale, and the secretary of the California Quarter Midget Race Association; his wife; and then-nine-year-old Danny McAndrews, a consistent winner of the Midget Races, were

THE GRAND PRIZE in 1960 was a Ford truck. It took a great deal of effort and tremendous support, but it was a very successful year.

Joan Wilson

BEVERLY HOFFMAN *The Queen of* **1959**

To Our Hospital Let Us Humbly Give All We Can That Others May Live

5% NET PROFIT from GRUBSTAKE DAYS

Will Go to the

HIGH DESERT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL FUND

№ 0

Name

Address

GRUBSTAKE DAYS QUEEEN TICKET !

1960 FORD HALF TON PICKUP

Courtesy BOB FAHY FORD, 220 E. Ramsey, Banning

5 percent Net Profit goes to HI-DESERT HOSPITAL FUND

Drawing, Sunday, May 15, 1960. Donation $1. You do not have to be present to win. Car on dis-

№ 0

3rd ANNUAL

Yucca Valley GRUBSTAKE DAYS

APRIL 18-19, 1953

Souvenir

PROGRAM

Sponsored by Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce

Yucca Valley, Calif.

1959 FOUND the town buying tickets on a new Rambler. It was raffled off courtesy of Price Motors in San Bernardino. Another successful year, thanks to hard-working volunteers.

Joan Wilson

Joan's Collection

CIRCLE YOUR WAGONS, the Indians are coming! Not quite. The 1952 Grubstake Days presented a rodeo. As usual, in those days the whole town participated. The road angling to left center is 29 Palms Highway. The white building on the upper right is now Usher Tires. What is now Din Ho restaurant is visible next to the white building. Triangle Park is shown top center. The rodeo was held at what is now the Hi-D Center. Yessir! Circle your wagons — something's coming, but it's sure not Indians!!

visiting at the Yucca Valley home of Helen Key. They inspected and approved of the local race site, north of the Shell Service Station, which had been graded and prepared by Billy Royal and Danny Pekarovich. The visitors then made arrangements for all 35 young contestants to stay overnight at the Townhouse motel, in Pioneertown during Grubstake Days. The races were an extremely popular event and the Association staged additional races in 1960, 1961, and 1963.

Art Miller, riding his champion parade horse, Peavine's Golden Major, made his first trek down the highway as Grand Marshal in 1958. Another year Art Miller headed the parade was in 1967, with Bob Purcell as the master of ceremonies. These two were indulging in a little historical repetition since Bob had often described Art Miller's pass-bys in Tournament of Roses Parades in Pasadena.

Through the years Art and Sheriff Frank Bland have been the Grand Marshal numerous times. Motion picture and television actors who have graced the town as Grand Marshals are Edgar Buchanan, Arthur Hunnicutt, Will Sampson, Jackie Coogan and Montie Montana.

Celebrities who have served as Honorary Mayors are Leo Carrillo, Dick Sinclair, Art Baker and Jimmy Van Heusen.

Other show business personalities who gave memorable performances over various Grubstake Days, include Carolina Cotton, Montie Montana (featuring Dancing Hooves), Joi Lansing and The Firehouse Five Plus Two.

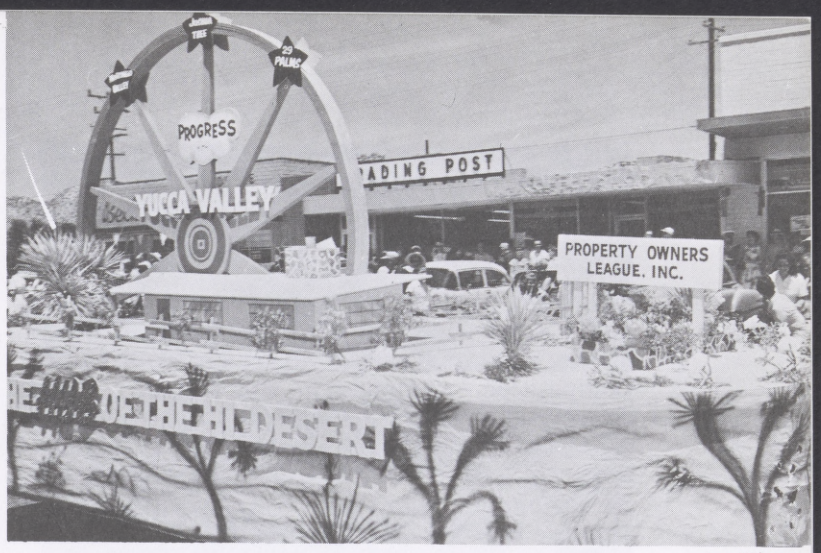
All the net profits from the 1959 Grubstake Days went to the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital Fund. The following year, 5% of the net profits for the Fast-Draw Contest were pledged to the hospital fund. The contest, held at Burnt Mountain Dude Ranch, featured the use of live bullets, $2,500 in prizes and established a Perpetual Trophy.

In 1956 a committee was formed to bring Jalopy Races to Yucca Valley as a featured attraction. Those on the committee were Lem Parsons, Dick Pierce, Paul Mercatoris, Dale Weston, David Harmon, Sherry Harmon, Danny and Ann Pekarovich, Gordon Piffer and Joan Wilson. The grading for the event, sponsored by the Southern California Jalopy Association, was donated by Billy Royal and Danny Pekarovich. It, too, was a very popular drawing card.

In 1963 the highlight was the Ground-breaking Ceremonies for the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital. There was also an exhibit of the proposed medical structure. Prizes for the rest of the usual Grubstake activities reflected the special interest with the hospital. A solid gold-headed golf putter was donated by Elsinore Machris and there were also a white fox cape; a color TV set; two all-expenses-paid trips to Las Vegas; a custom-made lounge chair; two western outfit gift certificates to "Nudies" of North Hollywood; and a gift certificate from Homestead Supplies, of Yucca Valley.

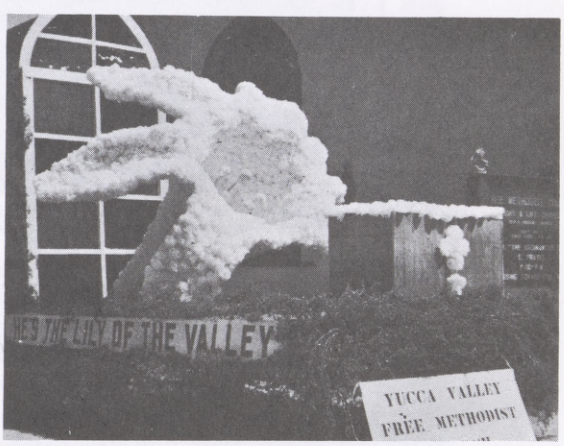
The first year the Yucca Valley Jaycees sponsored Grubstake Days, 1966, the group exhibited its youthful energy, zest and

L Humphreyville



Joan Wilson

IN THIS GALLERY of Grubstake Days photographs, we are showing just a few of the early participants, and the variety of things that made up the early Grubstake Days. The two photographs at the top of the page show examples of early prize-winning floats. Upper right, an early '50s float by the property owners league. Upper left, the elementary school entry, about 1955. Left, Sherry Belcher, a 1953 entry. Lower left, the art show at Triangle Park, 1968. Bottom, Monument Realty held their parade within the parade. This entry (or entries) was in the mid-50s. Bottom right, the 1961 prize-winning entry of the Free Methodist Church. Oh, yes! The Ubiquitous Grubstaker — he's at every Grubstake Celebration, searching for the Mother Lode of enjoyment! Most years, He's Found It!



Elsie Boyer

imagination in staging a spectacular parade. The next year they topped this by brining the very first circus (Graham Brothers Circus and Carnival) to ever appear in the Hi-Desert.

Regularly repeating attractions were the equestrian gymkhanas, cutting horse exhibitions, golf tournaments, art and crafts shows, flower shows, childrens' art shows, Junior Rifle Match Competition, community sing-a-longs, street dances, square dances, barbecues, beard judging contests, breakfast horseback rides, carnivals, concerts, games, barber-shop quartet food and crafts booths sponsored by local clubs and organizations, etc. After "Arbie's Irish Rose" and some other plays, the Yucca Valley Players settled down for an annual run of "Grubstake Gladys In..." She really got around , that gal, showing up in most of the western states and wilder towns.

Through the years considerable prices have been given away including a Ford, a Rambler, console color TV sets, Hondas, additional trips to Las Vegas, a $200 saddle, a $100 and a $50 U.S. Savings Bond, a .22 calibre Remington Rifle, electric tools, specialty lamps, hand-made costume jewelry, gift certificates for merchandise and services, etc. In 1969 the Yucca Valley Elks Lodge generously gave a away a travel trailer to a lucky John Walser, of Long Beach.

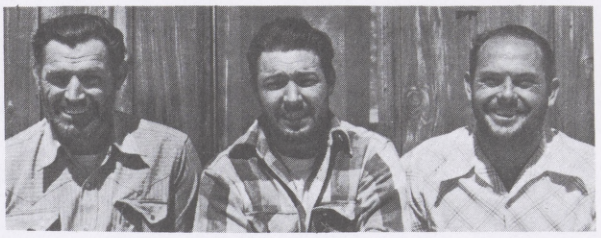
THE Yucca Valley Players presented many Grubstake plays. This one was the 1969 production of "Ten Little Indians." Unfortunately, the Yucca Valley Players no longer exists.

Again, through the years the Grubstake Days Buttons, one of the Chamber's regular major money-makers, has risen in price from 50¢ to $2 each. Also, the printed numbers have been dropped, thereby destroying, to many people's beliefs, the incentives of the lucky-number purchasers.

DICK SINCLAIR of T.V.S. Polka Parade, one of our early Honorary Mayors.

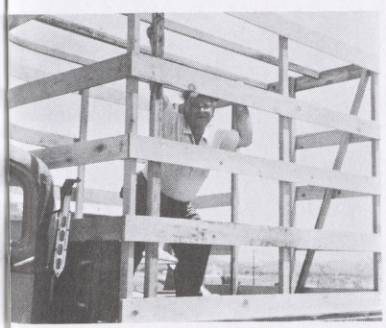
MOVIE STAR and early Californian, the late Leo Carillo, was another Honorary Mayor.

THE MOST ACTIVE of our Honorary Mayors was Songwriter Jimmy Van Heusen.



Joan Wilson

PAGEANTRY and personalities from the past.
These photographs will convey the idea that Grubstake Days was a big event. Hopefully, it still is, to most.
UPPER LEFT — A 1959 P.T.A. float. Upper right, the Red Dog Saloon. In the same parade — that's diversification. Above the Red Dog photo are three unsavory beard growers: Ed Hardesty, Tom Humphreyville and Jack Phoenix. Left, the Hi-Desert Star entry — note the 1958 automobile.
BELOW — The 1959 Princesses, left to right: Beverly Hoffman, Tina English, Cheryl Hammett and Nancy Garver. Extreme bottom left: Bates Mariott — 1955. Bottom right — Lanny Moffitt, Ace Hardware, installs Mama Calvert as Honorary Mayor — 1970.



Grubstake Days has traditionally had the habit of getting many people involved in its preparations. Among the earlier-day volunteers, who worked so thoroughly and with such attention to all details large and small on the parades and gymkhanas alone, were such steadfast workers as John L. Kee, Sr., K.T. and Cherie Belcher, Harry Housh, Billy Royal, Danny Pekarovich and Corky Kee.

Others working right along with them on a myriad of assignments and problems were Roy Roush, Odis J. Ray, Everett Taylor, Jule Boldizsar, Bates Marriott, Kenn Witting, C.H. Jacobs, Joan Wilson, Vesta Peters, Jack Weaver, Ruth Duarte, Charley Haney, Alfred N. Peters, Jack Coffman, Charlie Watkins, Lou Holland, Art Miller, John Haskell, Luella McGarry Williams, Charlie Gross, Alice "Honey" Fellers and Kirk and Laurel Martin.

Still other consistent hard workers were Hazel Miller, Ed and Hilda Hardesty, Ken Bonser, Betty and Bob Brownell, Florence and Ed Ware, Mary Ottis, George Evanoff, Jane Lace, Art Le Fever, Harvey Odgers, Corene Hammett, Betty and John Ehrismann, Dean Howell, Lucille List, Jerry Moore, Alice Bennett, Rod Jones, the total boards of directors of those years for the Chamber and so many others.

The Grubstake Brochures always ended with an invitation to return and almost all of the permanent residents went out of their way to speak to weekenders and strangers and make them feel welcome. ■

California Department of Forestry

During the Depression years of the 1930's a State Emergency Relief (SERC) was built in Big Morongo Canyon for the purpose of providing fire protection for the Morongo Basin. The old building is still standing.

In 1944, Ray Bolster and his family moved to Twentynine Palms and opened up a California Department of Forestry Station. The one truck operation, which shared quarters with the Sheriff's Office, was located on Adobe Road, north of the present Twentynine Palms Fire Station. That building now houses the ambulance service.

Bolster remained in Twentynine Palms until 1961, when the CDF moved in and shared space with the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District while its new (and present) headquarters building on Airway Avenue was planned and under construction. When the Yucca Valley CDF Station opened in 1963, Capt. George Meers was in charge.

The local CDF station officials administrate the volunteer fire-fighting programs of the communities within the Morongo Basin. The station also serves the vast unprotected areas of the eastern desert.

Under CDF guidance, in the Basin there are eight stations, seven fire trucks, three tankers, two rescue squads, nine paid employees and one hundred volunteers.

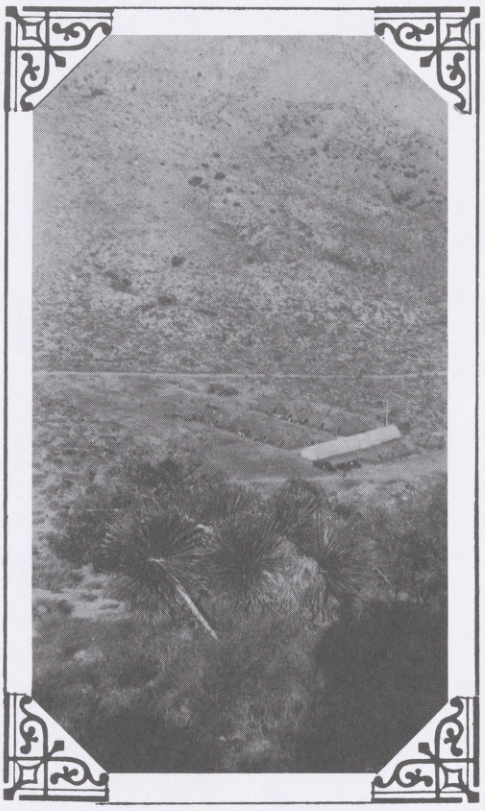
Station 19, Homestead and Johnson Valleys, has one fire truck and fifteen fire-fighters; Stations 32 and 33, Morongo Valley, has one fire truck, one tanker, one rescue squad, and fifteen fire-fighters; Station 36, Joshua Tree, has three trucks, one tanker, one rescue squad, one sedan and fifteen fire-fighters; and, there are two volunteer stations in Wonder Valley and fifteen volunteers in Pioneertown. Another station is being planned for Copper Mountain.

The current CDF station officials in Yucca Valley, under the command of Battalion Chief, includes Capt. Jerry Glover, Capt. Bob Oechsner, Capt. Tim Ricker and Capt. Bob Becker (stationed in Joshua Tree).

The crew of four fire-fighters includes Jeff Donche, Mike Nelson, Bobby Lake and Tracy Duke. The latter is the first woman assigned to the station. She has been here for three years.

Those who were living in the Hi-Desert in February, 1970, remember with deep sadness the Unigas delivery truck explosion and fire which claimed the life of Yucca Valley CDF fire-fighter, Paul Waring. Another CDF crewman, Engineer Ron Newport, was very badly burned in the fire. He survived and fought and won a long, painful recovery battle, returned to the job and worked his way up to Fire Captain

The residents of the Morongo Basin are very grateful for the spirit, bravery and skill of the CDF and all fire-fighters. ■



THE FIRST forestry outpost in the Morongo Basin — taken in Morongo Valley in the early '30s.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
THE RESOURCES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

BE FIRE SAFE!

FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

A number of people have been so inspired by Yucca Valley and its vistas that they have been moved to compose music about the town. As early as 1951, Al "Pee Wee" Weber and Victory Sullivan wrote the music and lyrics to "Yucca Valley Noches" and had the sheet music published. The song was dedicated to Dr. Mabel M. Fetter.

In 1957, Paul Hammett, a stalwart of the Yucca Valley Players, composed a song entitled, naturally enough, "Yucca Valley." A few years later he met Curt Massey, who had a musical program on Channel 4 Television in Los Angeles with "Liltin'" Martha Tilton and Country Washburn. Curt's brother, Albert, lived in Yucca Valley and the two kept in close touch. Ultimately, Curt, who could play just about every musical instrument, made a multiple recording of the song, using a piano, a melodica and two other instruments. Then, in the 1964 Grubstake Days Parade, the recording was played over a p.a. system on a float with a smiling, waving Curt aboard. Paul was understandably proud and happy. He also composed a song for the 1963 Grubstake Pageant program.

Three other local composers were the Linn Twins, Travis and Carroll, and their mother, Bessie, of Landers. Bessie composed the words and music for "Quiet Valley, Yucca Valley" and her sons composed the words and music for "Quest For Gold." The twins recorded the songs in 1962 on the Grubstake label. They, too, composed music for the 1963 Pageant program, and have ridden in Grubstake Days Parades, as did Bessie in the 1984 parade — in a gold colored Cadillac! "Quest For Gold" is a song about the community of Landers.

Most recently the Linn Twins entertained at the combination Birthday Party/Silver Anniversary of long-time friends, Newlin and Vernette Landers. Starting in 1961 Vernette opened and operated the Landers Post Office contract station as Clerk-in-charge for 21 years, concluding her contract on December 10, 1982. She and her husband have offered the Federal Government the land but have not heard the U.S. Post Office's final decision as yet. Ruth Long, president of the Morongo Unified School District's Board of Education, was one of the many guests at the party. She presented Vernette, who was a dedicated educator, with a Certificate of Appreciation For Outstanding Service to Students as a teacher and counselor for 37 years at colleges and public schools in California. The twins performed on a number of musical instruments at Vernette's party.

During its formative years the town of Yucca Valley was extremely fortunate to have among its active citizens five exceptional people — two poets laureate and three artists. All of them unhesitantly gave of their genius, talent, brains, brawn and elbow grease for the benefit of the community for both special occasions and projects and on a day-to-day basis. The poets, now deceased, were June LeMert Paxton and O.D. Thomas. The artists were Kirk Martin, Frank Garske and Antone Martin (also deceased). Yucca Valley is still, indeed, fortunate to have Kirk and Frank among the citizenry. Through the years, of course, they have been joined by many, many resident artists.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Lamberty's Drug Store opened in the late '40's, then it became the Country Store. Later it became the Yucca Valley Drug Store and was owned by Bates Marriott and Virginia Kurz. Still later Bates went into partnership with Bob McKay. When Bates retired Bob continued on alone. Then he moved his drug store to the new location in the Hi-D Center. There he became the partner of Stan Zarakov. When Bob died, Stan continued to operate the store he still occupies. The old original store was purchased by Hal and Pat Rubak in 1966 for MDX.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

S and L Lumber Yard opened in the late '50's. Later George Lyall bought his partner out. It is now Pioneer Lumber.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ernie Littlepage, while running Burnt Mt. Dude Ranch, also operated the Skating Rink in 1956.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Roger Melanson, in the early '50's wanted to be a part of the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department. He was due to get his physical and knew that he was a little over 1/2 inch too short. He went to Dr. Dean Fairbanks, who proceeded to put Roger on the table and stretch him. He was placed on a stiff, long board and his friends Danny and Ann Pekarovich drove him to San Bernardino in a station wagon. The stretching lasted long enough for Roger to pass the physical and be accepted. That is how close the Sheriff's Department came to losing one of the best deputies and one of the very best detectives it has ever recruited.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Lou Holland opened his Builder's Showcase in 1958.

Hi Desert Enterprise—Desert Star—

Some years back at a Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce meeting, President Roy Roush said to C.H. Jacobs, "Every time that gal visits another town she spots something and it ends up with our Chamber getting itself involved!"

Not in the least angry or bitter, as he said it everyone was laughing because he was talking about Joan Wilson — one of the chamber's (and the town's) driving forces for community progress in those days. And he was right!

For example: Back in 1957, Joan and her three children, Brenda, Charleen and David, were enjoying an Easter Vacation in Idyllwild. While there she picked up a copy of "The Town Crier," the small mountain community's newspaper — an 8½" X 11" mimeographed sheet full of local news and happenings. The wheels started turning in her head.

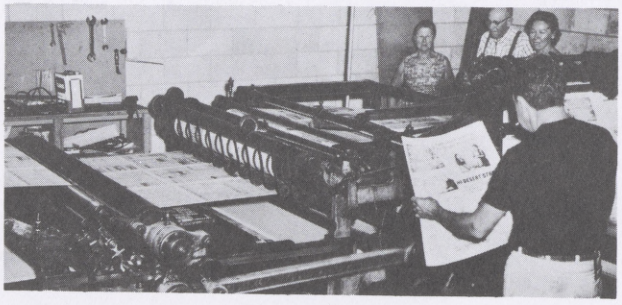
Enroute home, she stopped at the inviting "Lemonade — All You Can Drink For A Dime" sign at the old Hadley's Juice Bar in Cabazon. While there she "spotted something." It was Cabazon's small paper. Picking it up, Joan thought, "If towns the size of Idyllwild and Cabazon can have a newspaper, why can't we?" She asked where the paper was put out and drove over to the office of L.D. Tallent, the editor.

Tallent (later to become the Mayor) told her, "I went into this green." He said he had two girls on the paper, one a reporter and one to sell ads. Warning her, he said, "It's not easy." He then explained that he had the paper printed by Walker Larsen at The Desert Sentinel, in Desert Hot Springs. Larsen could "advise and help you over the rough spots," he told Joan.

She drove right over to the Sentinel office where Larsen did, indeed, advise her and fill her in on all the particulars of getting a newspaper started.

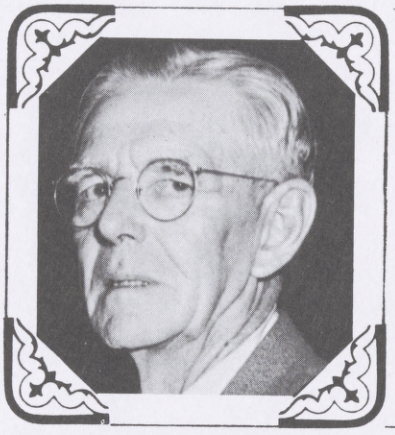
Hi-Desert Star Press from 1965.

Merrol Bellfield



Back in Yucca Valley, she contacted C.H. Jacobs and told him what she had learned. The pair went right back to see Larsen who told them he would print a tabloid-sized paper for them for $20.00 a page.

Meanwhile, back at the chamber, Roy Roush had called a special meeting. Joan walked in with Mr. Jacobs. When she announced — "Gentlemen, I'd like to have a newspaper. Loan me $300.00!" — she said she thought the board members were all going to faint. Mr. Jacobs gave his report and they discussed it. It was known that many of the townspeople were dissatisfied because no one was too successful in getting items into the Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms papers. The chamber, after further discussion, voted to go ahead and get a paper started.



C.H. Jacobs

Because of its inexperience in publishing, the chamber appointed a supervising committee to look over the whole procedure. The appointees were Roush, Florence Ware and Jack Coffman with John Sweesy to assist if needed.

The staff, which served without any remuneration of any kind, consisted of Jacobs, manager; Joan, advertising manager; and Ruth Dietman, reporter.

The first name selected for the new paper was The Hi-Desert Enterprise, but that was considered to be too long and was rejected. As they were ready for the first edition they named it The Desert Star. The legal forms were duly submitted and it was subsequently learned that a Needles newspaper already had that name. After learning this, the chamber ran a contest and Jane Lace won with her suggestion - The Hi-Desert Star.

The first issue, under the name of The Hi-Desert Star, was published on Wednesday, April 3, 1957. That first edition featured news of its own birth; a story on the new Masonic Hall to be built; the additions of the cafeteria/multi-purpose room and administrative offices at Yucca Valley

Hi Desert Star

Elementary School; news of a special park board meeting to approve the leasing of school property and building of Hi-Desert Park; a story about Resident Deputy Roland H. (Ron) Webb and other local members of the Sheriff's Department; an article by Dr. E.H. Kelley praising the healthful aspects of Yucca Valley; and a full page of cartoons.

The first editorial explained the chamber's position: "It is not our intention to go into the newspaper business, but with the cooperation of our business people, residents and property owners, and after much investigation, we feel confident that we can carry on until such time as a commercial newspaper may see fit to take over."

The paper was to serve Yucca Valley, Morongo Valley, Palm Wells, Paradise Valley, Yucca Mesa, Pioneertown and Rimrock. Mr. and Mrs. T.W. McDonald, of Inglewood, were the first subscribers. They later owned a home in Yucca Valley.

Alice (Honey) Fellers wrote a news column for Pioneertown and Irene Fox wrote a news column for Rimrock. Other community news was submitted and published.

The Yucca Valley Community Church, on Apache Trail, provided some much needed space for the newspaper to operate. Later the editorial, sales and office staff moved in with the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce in the Plaza storefront office and eventually was sharing that space with the Post Office, the Sheriff's Office and the County Building Inspector.

The first unknowledgeable mistake of any moment came when Joan made out the first advertising bills, charging by the square inch! Soon Walker Larsen was explaining that ads are charged by the column inch — There's a big difference! The local merchants and businessmen were only too happy and eager to sign up for ads and support the already popular paper.

During the weeks to come Joan found herself remembering Editor Tallent's warning as she went to seventeen meetings in one week and then wrote them up for the paper! She wasn't the only one, however, as additional news was ably provided by Charlotte Kincaid, Ruth Duarte, Lillian Jacobs, Eva Asmus, Dorothy McGraw and Mrs. Frank Windle. Cal Crotsenburg covered the news events for Morongo Valley and Palm Wells. Larry Asmus did the same for Yucca Mesa and also wrote a mining news column. Other special interest news columns were covered as follows: Sandy Harmon, teen-age events; Wes Yale, golf at the Hi-Desert Golf and Country Club; Burnt Mountain Dude Ranch and cove events; and Rubye Whitaker equestrian events and trail rides.

IN 1959 the Hi-Desert Star was staffed by Jerry Moore, Editor, left and Betty Brownell, Advertising Manager, right.

Dorothy McGraw, one of Yucca Valley's most consistent boosters, came in every week and addressed the subscription papers by hand and got them ready to mail out. Later some other volunteers joined her. There was no addressograph machine and a fund was set up to raise money for one.

With its "shake-down" period under its belt the Hi-Desert Star was a decided success. Its continuously-growing subscription lists included local residents and weekenders and 5-acre people from all over, even some from overseas. The chamber took extra copies to the motels and other places of public business for free distribution to any visitors. This, too, added to the lengthening list of subscribers.

This success was sweet; however, the paper's staff was beginning to suffer. Volunteers all, they had put in long hours and many miles with no salaries and paying all their own expenses. Worse yet, more than one car was worn out and in need of repair.

Suddenly, relief rose on the horizon (not in the form of the U.S. Cavalry, but someone just as welcome!) A four-way partnership of professional journalists bought the Hi-Desert Star and the chamber was out of the newspaper business! The June 26, 1957, issue ran the jubilant front-page headline, "Experienced Publishers Purchase Desert Star."

The very welcome new owners were Walker J. Larsen, the chamber's friend and mentor, and Harry D. Schultz. Larsen, a graduate of the University of Southern California's School of Journalism, published the Yucaipa News-Mirror as

well as the Desert Hot Springs paper. He had recently entered into a partnership with Schultz and together they purchased the Hi-Desert Star. At the time Schultz was publishing one daily and nine weekly newspapers located in North Hollywood, Big Bear, Lake Arrowhead, Crestline, Palm Springs, Mentone, Highland, Muscoy and East San Bernardino. (The Pulitzer Prize nominee had built up a chain of thirteen newspapers by the age of 33, a phenomenal record!)

What was of even more importance to the chamber was the fact that Schultz was, at the time of purchase, president of the San Bernardino County Newspaper Publishers' Association; the president of the Merchants' Association in San Bernardino; and had been appointed to one county-wide and one state-wide commission by then Assemblyman Jack Beaver.

The other publishing partners were Larsen's wife, Donalda, and Schultz's wife, Ollie; both experienced journalists. Larsen and Schultz were ex-servicemen and their wives were both ex-Waves. It was belived to be the only news publishing partnership in the country where both the men and their wives were all veterans.

All four worked hard and constantly on all their papers in every category of the publishing business. With such a full and demanding schedule it was bound to happen to somebody — and Larsen became very ill and could no longer continue. With deep regret the Schultz's bought out the Larsens. Soon, though, they realized that they, too, were feeling the pressures of the extra duties and responsibilities. While the excellent quality of the papers remained intact, the "burning the candle at both ends" routine began to make them pretty weary. Having fallen in love with the area it was a real heart-wrenching decision to make, but, on January 16, 1958, they sold the Hi-Desert Star and the Sentinel to Mark C. and Mabel Green.

Schultz announced that he and his family were going to take a well-deserved rest. A European trip proved to be agreeable and permanent for Harry D. Schultz, then and now headquartered in Switzerland, became the well-known financial adviser and publisher of the award-winning "International Harry Schultz Letter."

Mark Green had seventeen years experience in publishing weeklies and dailies in Illinois, Iowa and Florida. He had also been a U.S. Navy news correspondent in World War II.

Joan Wilson, too, was tired and wanted someone to take over as advertising manager. She was still a volunteer. She contacted Betty Brownell, who was working in Palm Springs. Betty, a practical realist at heart, said, "Joan, I'm not a fool like you. I have to be paid for my time!" Joan agreed and arranged for her to talk to Green and, in January, 1958, Betty started on her local career as one of the most successful advertising managers the paper ever had.

In February, 1958, Rod Jones became the editor. On May 21, 1959, Jerry Moore took over as editor and helped boost the Pioneer Pass Push and create interest in the PPGC.

The construction of a new building for the Hi-Desert Star alone was announced in May, 1960. It was to be constructed by Bill and Edna Adams, of Yucca Valley, as part of their Hi-D Center complex by the old Plaza. The Open House Edition for the paper's new quarters was published on October 27, 1960.

Rolland Jacquart and Darrell Degenhart, publishers of papers throughout Kansas, bought the local weekly in February, 1962. They bought the building in March, 1964. By July 1, 1970, the newspaper enterprise had become the Hi-Desert Publishing Co. Throughout these administrative changeovers the Hi-Desert Star continued to grow and prosper.

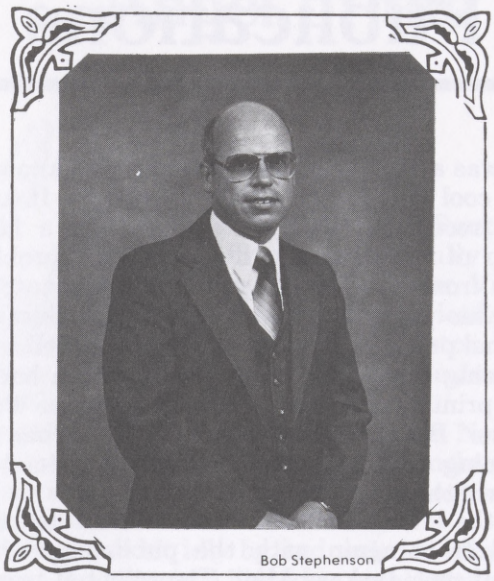
The expanding McGiffin Newspaper Corporation, of South Gate, purchased the Hi-Desert Star in 1970, with Hal J. Paradis serving as publisher. In 1973, Jack Harrington became the publisher for McGiffin, followed by Phil Tofani in 1976. Paradis returned as publisher in 1979. (Joan Wilson's Lifetime Subscription was duly dropped.)

Those who held editorial posts included Vonda Carlson, Lina McFarland, Doug Huff, Jim Hardesti and John Jackson. Art Mitz became editor of the Hi-Desert Star in 1975.

The McGiffin Corp. purchased The Desert Trail, Twentynine Palms, in 1976; and The Desert Sentinel, Desert Hot Springs, in October, 1981.

THE OPENING of the Hi-Desert Star.
ABOVE, the composing room; below, well-wishers.

Merrol Bellfield



HAL PARADIS, Publisher of the present-day Hi-Desert Star.

In the Hi-Desert Star's early years Jerry Moore, Glen Nufer and Robert Stephenson served as staff photographers. Stephenson later was promoted to Production Manager and oversees the off-set production work and printing of the Star-Trail/Sentinel papers and advertisers plus nine other publications. They are the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base paper, The Observation Post; the Big Bear High Country Life and the High Country Life Guide; the Hesperia Resorter; Yucaipa-Calimesa News-Mirror; Banning-Beaumont Moneysaver; Cherry Valley Sunshine Shopper; and the Victorville Action Ads. The Hi-Desert Star facilities also print the Phi Sigma Kappa, a nationwide quarterly, published in Indianapolis, Ind. ■

High Desert PICTORIAL

PUBLISHED IN YUCCA VALLEY, CALIF.

KEN WITTING - - EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
ERNIE C. PETERS - - - - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
KIRK MARTIN - - - STAFF ARTIST

ABOVE, masthead from a 1950 publication. Below, the 1968 Yucca Valley Graphic News.

GRAPHIC NEWS
YUCCA VALLEY CALIFORNIA

FASCINATING FACTS
ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

It doesn't seem possible after all those itinerant miners, cattlemen and ranchers — but, it's recorded that a Mr. and Mrs. Fred Cliffe named the road the Pioneer Pass!

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Tommy Bouchey built his famous restaurant in 1945. Because building materials were in such short supply immediately following the war, Tommy personally hauled all of it up himself for his construction project. After he had the foundation forms poured, someone in the road department came along and said the Morongo Basin area surveyor he had used had made a mistake on Tommy's survey and that the highway was going to come through part of his restaurant. He was going to have to dig up the foundation and move it back. Tommy, never one to back away from a problem, said he would not do it. "Move the road over, instead," he suggested testily . . . and they did!

Bouchey's was known throughout Southern California and was always filled. On weekends it overflowed with eager customers. People sat in their cars until their names were called, admitting them to a standing-room-only place at the bar, which was six and seven deep with customers. There were huge, comfortable booths for the diners, but this did not allow for a great many to be served at one time in the dining room. However, everyone thought the wait for the delicious food was more than worth it.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Lusky Brothers, publishers of city directories, came into Yucca Valley in 1960 and made arrangements to put out a directory for the town. Most of the town signed up. The Lusky Brothers got all of the research in hand. But, then, there was a delay. When the directory was ready to go again, they didn't check back to see that everything was all right. So, they printed the directories, only to find out that in the meantime all the phone numbers had graduated from three digits to Forest 5 numbers . . . and all the listings were wrong.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Chamber of Commerce's first "Welcome to Yucca Valley" sign was erected at the west entrance on May 29, 1958. All through those earlier years Paul Hammett painted hundreds of signs for the benefit of Yucca Valley. Another good citizen who donated so much time effort to the community, made decorations and toys for Christmas and helped on so many chamber projects was Ed Ware.

Early Yucca Valley Publications

O.D. Thomas claimed there was an electric current that came out of the ground at Yucca Valley and cured people of their ills and filled them with vitality. ------ This must have been the reason so many fine people were inspired to start so many local newspapers in the past. Furthermore, they ranged from very good to excellent publications. Most of them were ahead of their time.

In 1946, Homer and Ruth Stuart moved into the Hi-Desert and started a monthly magazine called The Desert Spotlight. It was a top-quality publication filled with interesting feature articles. One of its most consistent contributors was June LeMert Paxton. (Mrs. Paxton, O.D. Thomas and Merle Armitage were Yucca Valley's three early-day poets laureate.) Two years later the Stuarts changed over to a weekly newspaper format, called The Valley Star. This, too, was an excellent effort. One of The Valley Star's 1949 editions headlined "The Heaviest Snowfall In History Blankets Yucca Valley Area."

That same starting year, 1948, the Tri-Valley News was also published in Yucca Valley; unfortunately, its publisher's name is long forgotten. Then, from 1949 to 1950, the Yucca Valley Graphic News had a run at it. Also in 1949, the High Desert Pictorial got off to a fine start with Kenn Witting as editor-publisher and Ernie Peters as photographer.

The year 1949 had to be a vintage one for local publishing because that year, too, saw the birth of the Pioneertown Gazette. It was started by Ray Brown and taken over by Juan Cintron, a Legion chief from Puetro Rico. Cintron, who loved Pioneertown, was a friend of Val Jones, owner of the Red Dog. Kenn Witting bought the Pioneertown Gazette, a monthly paper filled with stories and features, in 1950, and published it for a year. With Kenn's pithy commentary and Ernie's beautiful pictures, the papers were appreciated by the townspeople.

Then came the Yucca Valley publishing gap that was finally plugged by the Hi-Desert Star in 1957. Inbued with the same spirit as the earlier journalists, those first chamber amateurs and, later, Larsen and Schultz gave a certain snap and sparkle to each issue of the paper that carried its readers and the town along with each development.

Bob Wilton, a former Western Air Lines publicist, had moved to Yucca Valley and, in January, 1964, he started the News Pictorial. It, too, was a quality publication and was known as "the cool paper with all the pictures." It had a good reception from its readers and a happy group of advertisers. All of Wilton's problems came from out-of-town printers. He wanted to print his paper in Yucca Valley and collect additional printing customers. He attempted to get financing for such a plant. Wilton even had his first printing customer—the Twentynine Palms Marine Base's Observation Post. When the financing failed to materialize, he joined the ranks of the others ahead of their time.

In the late 1960's Pioneertown was definitely heard from again with the publishing of the magnificent Jackass Mail. The talented team of Mark Amos and his wife, Marie, were the editors-publishers. Mark had something to say but he did so in such hilarious fashion the medicine was easy to swallow and, in fact, gained in influence because of the fun of reading the weekly paper. It was with deep regret that its many faithful readers-supporters received the news that it, too, was closing down.

By the latter half of 1967, Joan Wilson could stand it no longer. She wanted to publish a monthly newspaper of strong editorial stand and with many interesting features. So, in October, she started one and the banner of the Yucca Valley Graphic News flew once more throughout the town. Ill health plagued her and she had to give up her beloved paper in preparation to moving "permanently" to Florida to live with her daughter, Charleen. (There, she became even more sick and found she could not tolerate the humid climate. Her many friends were sorry she was so ill, but happy that she returned to her dry desert—permanently.)

It was in August, 1968, that she sold her paper to Dee Davis for $100. Dee changed it to a weekly paper and renamed it the Yucca Valley News. It became a scrappy fighter that earned an Inland Counties Press Club Award before Dee sold it, in 1970, to the Hi-Desert Publishing Co. for $8,000.

One of the superior special editions of the Hi-Desert Star was published on October 30, 1960, for the Open House when it moved into its new building on Apache Trail. The paper's new headquarters were constructed by Bill and Edna Adams as part of the Hi-D Center. The Open House Edition was devoted to stories and pictures of the new building's features, biographical sketches of its staff and descriptions of how each newspaper department functioned.

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Corinne Crawford opened Hi-Desert Fashions in 1957.

Angel of the Press—Elsinore Machris

A great part of Southern California, especially the community of Yucca Valley, lost one of its best friends and its foremost benefactor when Elsinore Machris died in Los Angeles on January 12, 1967.

As co-founder, along with her nephew, Norman Essig, of Sky Harbor Estates and Ranchos, she became a subdivider and developer of one of the largest subdivisions in Yucca Valley.

Never one to sit idly by and wait for things to happen, Mrs. Machris helped to establish the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital; its district; and its orginial fund-raising arm, Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, Inc. She also founded the HDMC Guild and was its honorary president.

Also, in this early stage of Yucca Valley's growth, she donated Machris Park, complete with acreage, clubhouse and equipment, to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District; and she bought and operated the Copper Room Restaurant at the Yucca Valley Airport.

The 84 year old philanthropist was born in Watertown, Wisc. In her early career she was a newspaper woman in Milwaukee and Chicago, establishing a life-long interest in the press.

In a biographical sketch prepared by Mrs. Elmarie Essig, she states: "In 1905 Elsinore went to California and was employed by an insurance company as an adjustor. Her big opportunity came (in 1906) when her company sent her to San Francisco as an appraiser after the earthquake.

"In 1907 she married George Machris and for the next 44 years worked hand in hand with her husband in his business enterprises, mainly in the founding of the Wilshire Oil Company."

Following her husband's death in 1952, Mrs. Machris financed a memorial to him by establishing the George and Elsinore Machris Cardiac Hospital at the City of Hope, in Duarte. Altogether she donated $1 million to this hospital.

Through the years she donated to four more hospitals. They were; Desert Hospital, Palm Springs, where she purchased and gave all of the original X-ray equipment and additional sizable monetary gifts; Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, where she contributed $60,000 before it opened and purchased and gave all of the X-ray equipment as it opened; and other generous sums to Cedars of Lebanon Hospital and Childrens' Hospital, both in Los Angeles.

Elsinore Machris

She was gratefully given the title of "Angel of the Press" by the Greater Los Angeles Press Club when she established a scholarship program for UCLA journalism students as part of the LAPC's 8-Ball Welfare Foundation. She was made an honorary life member. Altogether, she donated $60,000 to the scholarship fund.

In Palm Springs she donated $25,000 to the cause and was considered to be the founder of the Desert Press Club and was an honorary life member.

While she was living she also contributed to the Spastic Childrens' Foundation, the Jewish Home For The Aged, St. Theresa's Catholic Church and to a number of youth centers.

Following her death, her will set up a living trust for six organizations with income derived from her estate, estimated to be in excess of $15 million. The six were the Salvation Army; Braille Institute; Midnight Mission; American Heart Association; Damon Runyon Cancer Fund; and HDMH, Inc., the latter to administer the funds for the Yucca Valley hospital and the National Arthritis Foundation.

In her will she also left an additional $10,000 to the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District.

She lived by her creed to do good deeds and help others because she "will not pass this way but once." But, as the L.A. Press Club pointed out: " 'The Angel' is gone, but the good she did lives on."■

Hi-Desert Nature Museum

"Do you people realize what you have here?" queried the visitor from back east. "For a town this size it's remarkable," he continued, "to come up with two such unique attractions as Desert Christ Park and your Hi-Desert Nature Museum. The two make quite impressive feathers in your cap!"

The impressed gentleman was visiting friends in Yucca Valley and, as part of the local tour, had already been to see Desert Christ Park. He was just leaving the Hi-Desert Nature Museum. "This is something special," he said as he walked away.

While it may seem that we local citizens are not paying much attention to them, the people of Yucca Valley are justly proud of their two star attractions. Unlike the native New Yorker who has never been to the top of the Empire State Building, we have been many times to our two "must see" places and have escorted numerous friends, relatives and "visiting firemen" on their first trips through these "two such unique attractions."

Literally thousands of people from all over California, from every one of the fifty states and from at least a dozen foreign countries have visited the two locations which both happen to be operated under the auspices of the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District.

Indeed, following its Grand Opening on October 21, 1964, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum went on to welcome just short of 1,000 visitors during its first month of existence.

It started small, being housed in an 800 square foot building in Hi-Desert Park. At that time Jerry Moore was the district director. The park board, despite the district's then small size and budget, was far-sighted enough to approve of the building of the museum and of the employing of Miss Evelyn G. Conklin as its curator-naturalist. The district board consisted, at that time, of Chairman Al Fisher, Art Chase, Roy Roush, Milton Murry and Mrs. Hazel Miller.

It was soon apparent that the small but mighty museum could easily use lots more room. In fact, the park district was experiencing growing pains in all directions. Therefore, after months and months of planning and many meetings, the park district entered into a Joint Powers Authority Agreement with San Bernardino County and the Yucca Valley Community Center was constructed. The Hi-Desert Nature Museum was a part of the complex.

THE OLD Nature Museum on Onaga Trail had a lot of rustic charm. Above, Camilla Hudson (at left) and Evelyn Conklin (second from left) watch as one of the displays are discussed. Camilla Hudson, left, and Evelyn Conklin watch as Virginia Nahhas, Park District Board Chairman, explains exhibit to Ranger Supernaugh, Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Monument — 1965.

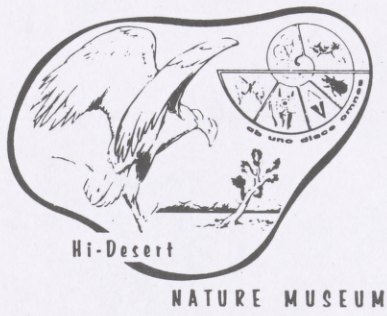
It opened the doors of its new home in November, 1973. The official Grand Opening for the 3,200 square foot museum building was held December 1, 1973. Since it has been in operation, the museum has attracted nearly two million visitors including school and youth groups, hobby organizations and just plain people interested in desert lore.

The museum building is in the shape of an L. One wing features Arts and Crafts and the other houses Natural History exhibits. Outside, space has been provided for a Nature Garden.

Since it first opened, local and visiting artists have been able to display their works at the museum. Each month a different artist is selected as the guest exhibitor. Displayed for a full month, the show is usually hung the first Thursday. On the second Saturday a public reception and tea honoring the artist is held.

Both sides of a 4'x16' wall are provided for the artist of the month. The wall space is decorated with special art by Kirk Martin, including his famous series of Western Song Classics.

Another very special feature is the Fluorescent Display Room. The outstanding diorama backgrounds were painted by artists Kirk Martin, Nick Yelenti and Katholeen Perry.



Kirk Martin-designed logo.

Among the other arts and crafts to be seen are the impressive works of such groups as the local Morongo Basin Gem and Mineral Societies, the China Painters' Clubs, special interest groups, youth organizations, etc. and, of course, those works of individual hobbiests such as metal works, wood carvings, doll collections and accompanying wardrobes, etc.

Each month one of the display cases is changed, while other cases are changed every two to six months.

The family and childrens' favorites, however, have to be the exhibits in the Natural History secton. In the beginning the majority of these collections belonged to Evelyn Conklin. On rotating exhibit are sea shells, gem and mineral specimens, pine cones, wood displays, insects, bird's eggs and bird's nests. Mounted specimens include the three types of squirrels which live in the Morongo Basin, a pack rat, kangaroo rat, pocket mouse, deer mouse, pocket gopher, cotton tail rabbits, quail, etc.

A most successful exhibit is that of the Mini Zoo where live animals and reptiles are on display. Evelyn's handling of these small "beasties" drew the attention of a number of larger museums and zoos and of government entities of all kinds. One of these latter organizations was the California State Water Resources Board. In 1979, it was producing a film on the state aqueduct project and needed a Mojave Green Rattlesnake. The state authorities had heard that Evelyn had a female snake that fit the bill. And, so, without even having to sit up at a drug store soda fountain, "Greenella" was discovered. Evelyn served as her technical director and agent. She said that the way "Greenella" took directions and acted her part she was well on her way and her star was obviously rising. Then "Greenella," like so many award-winning actors before her, found that waiting for "just the right part" could be nerve-wracking — and, unfortunately, before another starring role offer came along, she died. But other of her museum companions live on to entertain the visitors.

There are also outstanding wildflower collections accompanied by a very special display of twelve of Henry R. Mockel's Seriographs of

EVELYN CONKLIN, second from left, is shown receiving a display from members of the Gem and Mineral Society at the old museum.

desert wildflower prints. These prints cover two of the walls in the Natural History section. All the Mockel Seriographs have given or purchased with memorial funds through the Hi-Desert Nature Museum Association. Luckily, there are additional funds waiting for the purchase of more.

"Only the most prestigious museums and galleries have the Mockel Seriographs, thus we are proud to have our few," said Evelyn.

She is also extremely pleased at a $500 donation from the Chevron Oil Co. which will enhance her popular slide show. The gift will be used to purchase the proper tape recorder accessory equipment which will make possible a synchronized audio/visual system for a more complete slide presentation.

It was not by chance that Evelyn and her father, Slim Conklin, chose Yucca Valley as a place to settle in. As first class nature lovers they had been exploring and studying the desert areas for years and had purchased property in Pipes Canyon. Evelyn, born in San Diego, received her education in Pasadena and La Verne, majoring in Botany.

Slim was formerly Park Superintendent/Director and Naturalist with the Los Angeles County Park and Recreation Department for 26 years. Before that he spent eight years with the Los Angeles Forestry Department.

Evelyn, following in Slim's footsteps, also worked for the L.A. County Park and Recreation Department where she initiated and pioneered the nature museum concept. It was she who planned and created the first of its kind on the west coast — the Trailside Nature Museum at

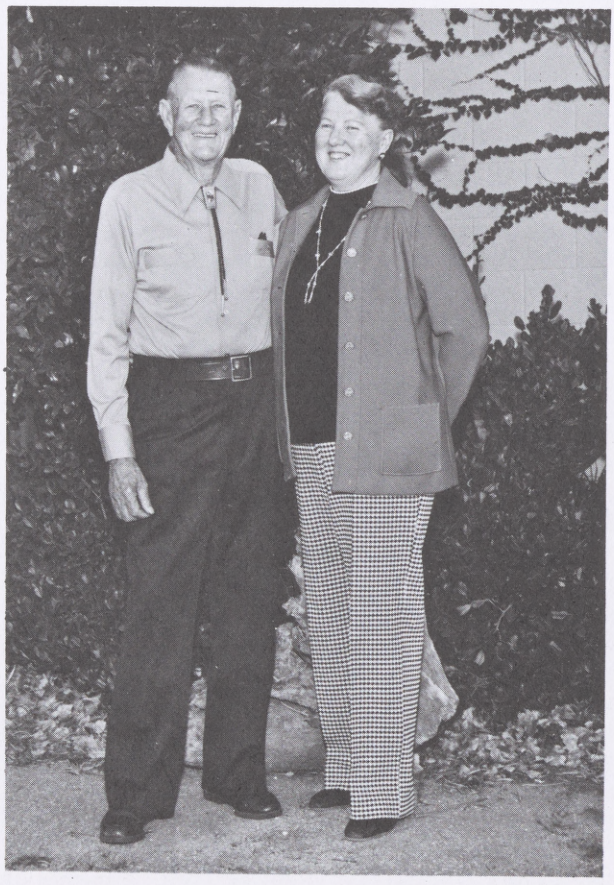
San Dimas Canyon Park — in 1948. With that she set a standard that is now in use all over Southern California. In the 1950's she was asked to plan and create nature museums for San Bernardino County and the California State/Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia. She declined, but her San Dimas museum did inspire the Arboretum, the Santa Barbara Nature Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum all to expand their nature exhibits.

Before Evelyn officially set up shop here, Slim built all the display cases and did the interior finish work for both the smaller cases and did the interior finish work for both the smaller and present museums.

In addition to extensive professional recognition, Evelyn was awarded a plaque of appreciation by the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce in 1966-67; was made the first Honorary Life Member of the Yucca Valley Art Association in 1974; and was named Woman of the Year by Soroptimist International of Yucca Valley, in 1976.

ART EXHIBIT and display case at the new Nature Museum. Art exhibits are changed monthly.

SLIM AND EVELYN Conklin. Evelyn conceived the Hi-Desert Nature Museum. Her father, Slim, worked hard to bring her creation to life.



As soon as the Hi-Desert Nature Museum opened in 1964, Park Director Jerry Moore sagely chose the indomitable Camilla Hudson to serve as chairman of a museum auxiliary. It, too, started small, but it had big ideas. To begin with it had Camilla, the Conklins and some of their close friends. Today its members include approximately 600 most enthusiastic supporters.

With the help of Gerald A. Smith, the San Bernardino County Museum Director, the Auxiliary got promoted, wrote by-laws and became an Association on June 10, 1969.

Mrs. Hudson was the president for a number of years and has been followed in that office by Mable Mellette, Rachel Quilter, Beulah Quiette, Jean Burns and, currently, Walter Jahnke.

Since its formation the Association has assisted in the loaning-for-exhibition program; has purchased outright some of the exhibits; arranged for the donations of some private collections; has purchased the display cases; and has, generally, provided funds for emergencies and other contingencies.

The association members also mounted compelling protest-letter-writing campaigns and attended public meetings in Yucca Valley and in San Bernardino when the exhibits were threatened with transfers to other museums; and, most especially, when the very life of the Hi-Desert Nature Museum has been in jeopardy.

Artist Kirk Martin has designed a fitting "native-grown" emblem which has become the Logo for both the Museum and its scrappy, protective Association.

Park and Recreation District

The initial physical entity of the local park district (meaning its first park) was born almost simultaneously with The Desert Star. The first issue of the first newspaper, dated Wednesday, April 3, 1957, featured as a front-page story, the announcement of a public meeting to be held the following night to decide the pros and cons of acquiring the town's first park.

At that meeting, held in the Community Service Clubhouse, a good showing of townspeople and the board officers approved of the proposal which culminated in the development of Hi-Desert Park. Hans Thompson, a State Park and Recreation Specialist, had been invited to use his expertise and to speak on the feasibility of leasing unused school property for park purposes. In this case the unused southern portion of Yucca Valley Elementary School. This type of cooperative leasing had been growing throughout the state.

"It results in a definite economy of tax money by eliminating much unnecessary duplication of equipment," said a park spokesman.

Mr. Thompson approved of the plans for the first park, which were developed by C.H. Jacobs. He especially liked the informal separation of children and adults by interest groups. Most of the equipment was to be purchased by the park district. It was explained that the district's budget of $3,400 would be available to develop the park that year. "It will give us a good start," said Mr. Jacobs. That night it was approved that the park and school districts enter into a ten-year lease, at $1.00 per year, with the park district having an option to renew the lease or purchase the property.

The year before, in correspondence dated February 20, 1956, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors set up the first Board of Advisors of the Yucca Valley Park, Recreation and Parkway District. Those who served on that formation board were John Sweesy, Roy Roush, C. H. Jacobs, Mrs. J. Stanley and Mrs. Jane Lace, board secretary.

Miss Joan Jackson was the first Recreation Director to be hired. She was much loved by the children for her Craft Classes, game programs, her guitar playing and Sing Along programs. She was replaced by Jerry Moore as District Director. It was under his direction that the district had its greatest growth, acquiring park property, the Nature Museum, planning the early-day swimming programs and conferences, the establishing of the Museum Auxiliary, the Recreation Auxiliary, the beginnings of the Yucca Valley Coaches Association, Hi-Desert Photo Fans and other specialized clubs, etc. Jerry was also instrumental in the starting of the Pioneer Push and in keeping it going as it evolved into the Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge.

Joan's Collection

THE CONSTRUCTION of Triangle, or Sabre Tooth Tiger Park at 29 Palms Highway, Acoma and Yucca Trail. This was the site of some of the Grubstake Days Art Shows. This was one of our first parks. The only park on the Roadrunner Route, now Highway 62.

In November, 1959, the district was reorganized as the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District with the board assuming self-governing powers by approval of the Secretary of State in correspondence dated February 17, 1960.

Hi-Desert Park proudly contained a complete children's playground with swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, crawl-throughs, exercise bars, a tetherball installation, etc. There were also tennis, basketball, handball and shuffleboard courts and croquet and horse-shoe throwing areas. There were picnic and barbecue facilities in the Arbor. The district offices were headquartered there. The park was also the original home for the first complete branch library and the Hi-Desert Nature Museum.

Primary plans for the park included a large community swimming pool, designed to be covered or enclosed at a later date. Many townspeople supported this location and were opposed to the building of the pool at the Yucca Valley Intermediate School campus (now Yucca Valley High School). Glenn Hardy, local teacher and later MUSD Superintendent, was a member

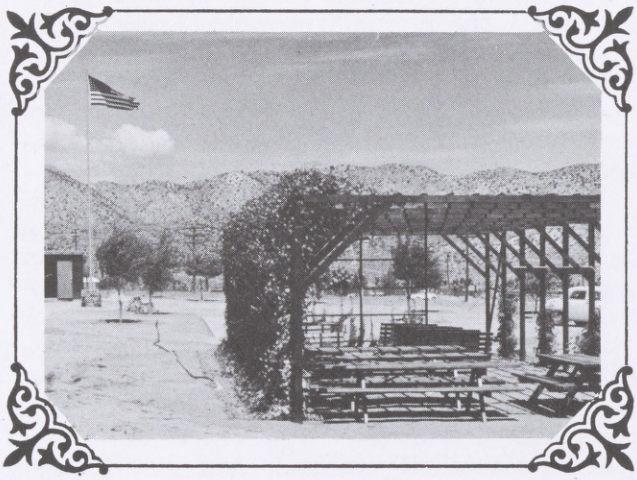
of the park advisory board at the time and was anxious to have the two districts work together on building the pool at the Intermediate School.

The protesters were over-ruled and the park and school districts entered into a joint contract and the modern, Olympic-sized pool was constructed. When now considering its apparently eternal maintenance problems and its divided-usage hang-ups, a number of these same people sadly shake their heads.

However, despite the troubles, the swimming pool is a very popular place in the summertime. It serves as the scene of Desert Swim Conference Meets wherein Yucca Valley's two Swim Teams — The Sea Horses and the Trojans — take on all comers. For the rest of the community there is recreational swimming and lessons for all ages and all stages of accomplishment.

In the mid-60's Mrs. Elsinore Machris donated the land for Machris Park, located in the Sky Harbor Estates section. In those first years, Machris Park was the only home for the Tri-Valley Little League and Yucca Valley Coaches Association baseball games. It has a playground and picnic area and clubhouse was the site of various meetings, get-togethers and art lessons.

The land for Paradise Valley Park was donated by Marvin Krantz, Yucca Valley developer. Modeled as a perfect example of a neighborhood park, it featured a childrens' playground and picnic facilities.



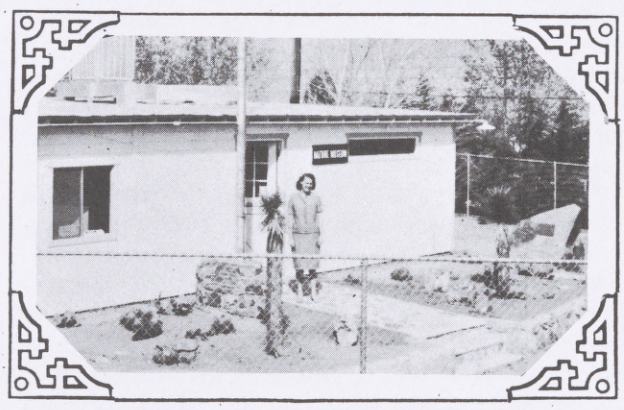
MARVIN KRANTZ, Yucca Valley developer, donated the land for Paradise Park, above. It features children's playground and picnic facilities.

In 1965, a newly-formed Recreation Auxiliary was headed by Mrs. Albert Gilbert, as General Chairman. It served as a sounding board for resident's needs and wishes. Many chairmen of sub-committees came forward and expressed desires pertaining to their special interests such as photography, amateur radio, travel, swimming, tennis, etc.

South Park, near Black Rock Canyon Park in the Joshua Tree National Monument, was planned for the development of an archery range and nature trails. North Park was set aside as a wildlife reserve and hiking trails. Yucca Park, beside the Twentynine Palms Highway on the Morongo Grade, has a Rifle Range, built by the Yucca Valley Rotary Club, and a picnic area.

Desert Christ Park, which strikingly displays the famous Biblical statues of Antone Martin, also has a picnic area. Triangle Park has another Martin statue—the Sabre-tooth Tiger—a rose garden and numerous outdoor art shows.

Others who have served as board members through those early and middle years are Al Fisher, Bob Schoenleber, Gil Buck, Art Chase, Mrs. Hazel Miller, Milt Murry, Harold Sipe, Dr. C. J. Mersch, Mrs. Phyllis O. Grubaugh, Mrs. Virginia Nahhas, Stephen Heard, Lowell Like, Miss Mary Young, Jim Goodman, Art Jerchow and Bob Nordyke.



HI-DESERT Park's Nature Museum, taken in 1964 — Evelyn Conklin is shown standing in front of the museum.

It was the same old story by the early '70's. The town was growing fast and more space was desperately needed by the park district, the Nature Museum and the branch library. A Community Center was the answer.

Four major land offers were made for the center. Mrs. Alma Katje offered a 20-acre parcel adjacent to the then Yucca Valley Golf Club (now Blue Skies Country Club) for $60,000, with four acres donated free. She and her late husband, Art, had previously donated acreage to the school district for an elementary school in Yucca Mesa.

Norm Essig and Bob Schoenleber offered a ten-acre parcel between the high school campus and the Thrifty Shopping Center. The acreage offer specified that four acres would be free, one acre would be sold for $2,750 and the remaining five acres available for purchase later at fair market value. Norm and his philanthropic aunt, Elsinore Machris, had previously donated the land for Machris Park.

Dr. and Mrs. Richard S. Nahhas, both very active in all levels of community activities, offered a fifteen acre parcel west of the Mormon Church and across the street from the high school, with 660 feet of frontage on Onaga Trail. The asking price was $49,000 for fifteen acres, with an additional fifteen acres available for $20,000.

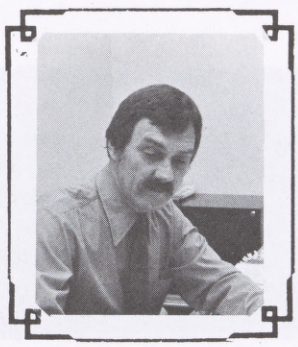
Fred Storey offered a 21.8 acre parcel with 300 to 330 feet of highway frontage for $86,000. Also, there was an option to buy an additional fifteen acres north of the Flood Control Channel at $2,500 per acre. Mr. Storey also had made his donations in the past, having offered the land for Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital at a considerably reduced price.

It was this last offer that was accepted by all the park and county officials and is the site of the Yucca Valley Community Center.

Therefore, after much planning and re-planning the center was erected in 1973. Construction was accomplished by use of a Joint Powers Authority Agreement between the County Board of Supervisors and the local park district. Serving on the Yucca Valley Community Center Authority were Leo Bitterman, president; David G. Cubitt; Wayne B. Gaw; and Keith J. Lee.

The center houses the Yucca Valley Branch Library, the Hi-Desert Nature Museum and the County Department of Public Social Services.

The center is also the headquarters for the park district. A large meeting room is available to the public for meetings and social affairs. Recreation offered in the center building includes ping-pong, pool, arts and crafts. Outside there are lighted basketball and volleyball courts, a softball field, children's playground and picnic area.



Laurenz A. Harris, present Director of Parks and Recreation.

Under Park Director Larry Harris, a staff of fourteen employees put on winter and summer recreation programs and seven employees keep the parks in good condition. The recreational staff includes Barbara Shiflett, Jim Schooler, Susan Schroeder, Phyllis Clerihew, Connie Connaughton, Darryl Whitley, Dawn Boldt, Pam Eubanks, Jeri Smith, Jim Nosek, Jan Lamaire, Barbara Jones, Alynne Wheeler and Joni Barkhuff. The maintenance crew is Tom Warner, Chuck Morris, Lionel Toney, Robert Osborn, Chris Pelletier, Larry Kelley and Rick Gomez.

Outdoor recreation for winter and summer programs include youth flag football, adult basketball, youth basketball leagues, adult singles and doubles tennis tournaments, T-Ball leagues for boys and girls, men's and women's Slo-Pitch softball leagues, adult volleyball leagues, youth soccer, adult softball leagues, a full swimming program, aqua-trim classes, day camps at Machris Park and dog obedience classes. Special events center around the Ski Club, the Teenage Youth Club (which goes on camping trips) and the Bicycle Club. During the latter's Wheel-O-Rama spectacular the club presents Bicycle Fun Day and a Skate Fun Day. There are also Flora in the Field sessions of nature studies and a specialized program for Handicapped Recreation and Civic Activities.

Indoor activities feature classes in Aamodt Oils, Cartooning For Fun, Children's Art Classes, Creative Crafts, Needlepoint on Plastic, Stained Glass Making, Ballet, Community Band, Guitar, Jazzercize, Tap and Jazz, Tumbling and Jazz, Baton Twirling, Kung Fu, Tai Chi, Yoga, Prepared Child-birth and Pre-school Classes.

Senior Citizens participate in bowling, hiking, ballroom dancing, swimming, health care programs and, in the winter, twice-a-month trips to Desert Hot Springs for hot spa baths and swimming. The seniors are now happily in their own quarters, the $582,000 Senior Center Building, which was constructed on the west side of the Community Center property. In addition, to a full recreation program they now have their own place to see Social Security and other Senior representatives. This also gives them a lot more space for the Nutrition for Seniors Program.

Still other special activities for all ages are the park-sponsored bus trips to Disneyland, Magic Mountain, the Indio Date Festival, Universal Studios Tour, Roller Skating Day at Big Bear, tours of Lake Gregory and Corona Del Mar. theatre plays and shows in Los Angeles and to Swing Auditorium, in San Bernardino, for a special presentation by the world-famous Royal Lippizzaner Stallions from Austria.

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The Yucca Valley Community Center Dedication Ceremony was held on November 31, 1973.

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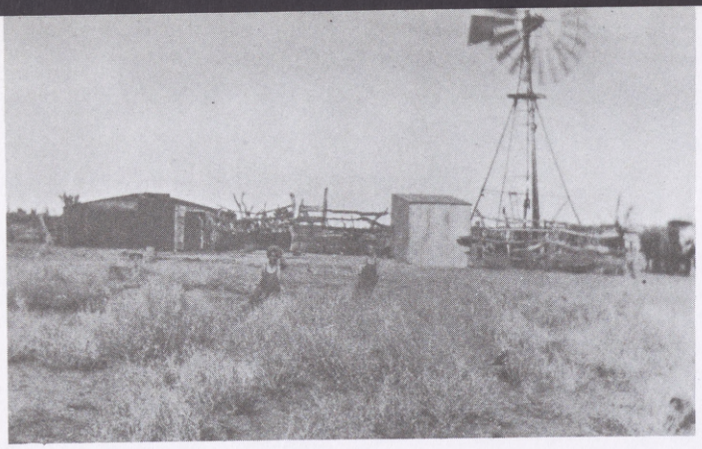
The Senior Citizen Center opened on September 8, and the Dedication Ceremony was held on September 22, 1982.



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Yucca Valley. . .

(1) Warren's Well, 1914. (2) You've read much about Hardesty curving s Market, Post Office and Gas Station. Here is an ad from a 193 The en publication. (3) Shoveling snow along the road to the Hudson Homnow Inte stead in 1926. (4) Frances Sargeant at her homestead in 19 ren's We (5) John Redden, left, at home — the Redden Homestead, 19 — $3,950 (6) Check the 1950 price of real estate in Pioneertown — 1¼ acr 13) Picnic $800. (7) A 1947 aerial view of Yucca Valley by Willie Boldizsar. The Joshu

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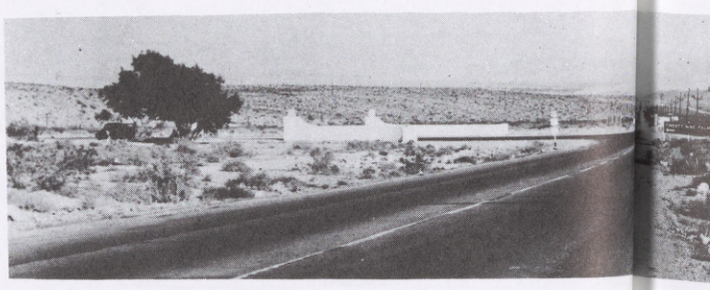

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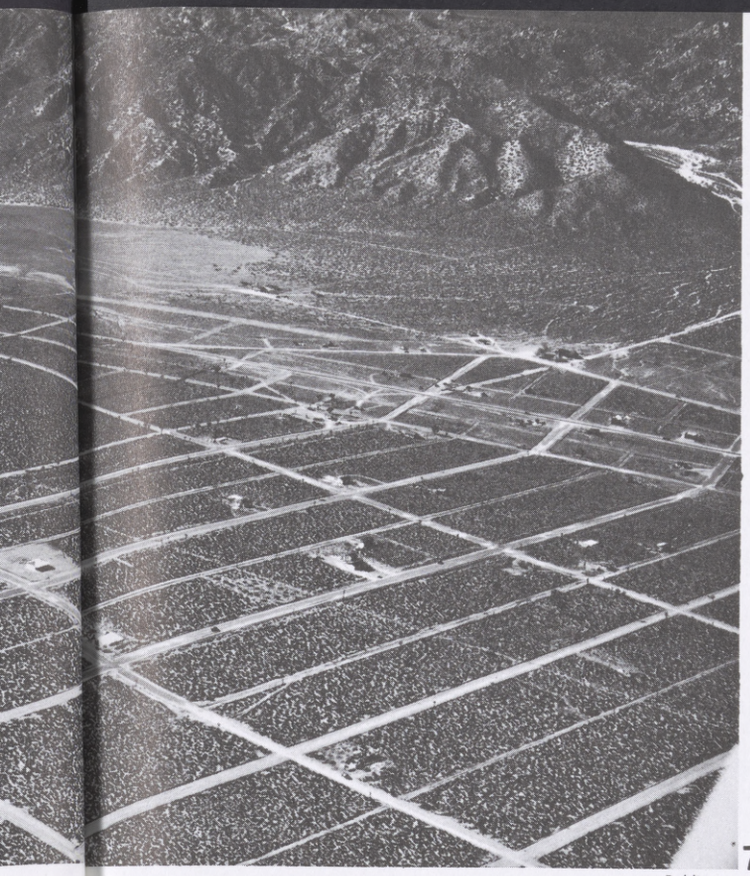

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Frances Ellis Collection

. . The Way We Were

t Hardest curving street at the lower left corner is Deer Trail at Navajo. from a 1938 The entrance to 29 Palms Highway in the 1940's — Highway 99 is udson Hom now Interstate 10 — 29 Palms Highway is now Highway 62. (9) War- ead in 19 ren's Well in 1949. (10) A 1946 shot of Yucca Valley. (11) A 1950 sign estead, 19 — $3,950 homes . . . Wow! (12) Edna Redden with Duke — 1923. — 1¼ acr 13) Picnicking at Black Rock Spring in 1915. Black Rock is now part of oldizsar. The Joshua Tree National Monument. (14) Before Post Office was added.

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Johnnie Hastie and Old Betsy

Most of the more current crops of newcomers are apt to think that Johnnie Hastie started his bus service when the U.S. Marine Corps took over the base at Twentynine Palms. No, he was here much longer ago than that. It was in the depths of the Depression and the mid-thirties when Johnnie first drove into Twentynine Palms. His vehicle was the soon-to-become familiar, 1928 twelve passenger bus complete with wood-burning stove — lovingly called Old Betsy. In those first days it was said that he lived in the bus.

Right away he began hauling freight and passengers between Twentynine Palms and Banning and the Desert Stage Lines business was born. At that time there were only 150 people in the entire Morongo Basin. The population was composed of miners, ranchers, World War I veterans, homesteaders and a scattering of children. There was the small town of Twentynine Palms and mostly wide-apart homesteads west of that. While he never really lacked for business he realized that he wasn't going to make it financially. Hailing from the State of Washington, he liked the sunny desert climate and wanted to stay.

He decided what he would do and called a public meeting of all his customers. He told them he was going to donate his bus to the Chamber of Commerce and that he was going to start a specialized, personal pick up and delivery service with Old Betsy. He explained that he operated under the State Railroad Commission regulations and, stating calmly, "I will not overcharge you," he said he would deliver anything under ten pounds for ten cents. A bale of hay would be fifty cents over the price of the hay.

The chamber officials said they did not think they could accept and take over the bus' ownership, but everyone certainly took to the delivery idea. He made $450.00 the first month. Then a benefit dance was held and at this affair the people bought advance tickets good for one year for transportation to Banning; there were even connections to Los Angeles available if desired. This netted another $450.00 and enabled Johnnie to stick it out. It also enabled the soft-spoken, polite and unassuming man to become one of the desert's most colorful characters.

His very popular service expanded in volume and scope. He had a saddle horse that he rode around Twentynine Palms, picking up orders from the townspeople. In later years these were left at a pickup point at Four Corners. In Joshua Tree the orders were tied on to an old iron ring that had been hammered into a joshua tree. In Yucca Valley the orders were left at Hardesty's Market and Post Office. For years and years he drove down to Banning and back, seven days a week. One round trip per day and he was loaded with passengers, orders, the money to pay for them, shopping lists, explicit instructions and measurements. In those first years there were no

THE ORIGINAL 29 Palms Stage, "Old Betsy," a 12-passenger, 1928 bus. Johnnie Hastie's bus was the only commercial transportation for years.

Joan's Collection

doctors, no drug stores, no banks, not many stores of any kind in the Morongo Basin.

Through the years Johnnie did the banking in Banning for many of his customers, picked up the Basin mail at the Post Office (later from Whitewater's Post Office), matched swatches of drapery material with paint samples and picked out numerous formals and dress suits from the rental shop for many festive occasions.

He made a number of stops in the small town in San Gorgonio Pass, purchasing such items as special supplies and machinery parts for the miners, tires, automobile parts, car batteries, paint, medicine, hay, grain and feed, fresh vegetables, fruit, books, thread, yardage, patterns, loads of Christmas presents and many wedding dresses and fresh flower bridal bouquets.

For a memorable occasion for the Heard family in Yucca Valley, he bought and delivered a graduation dress for Mary Oakvid's daughter, Carol Heard. Another time a nanny goat was purchased and brought back so a sickly child could have goat's milk to drink.

In the category of unforgettable trips there were the times the flash floods washed out the road through the canyon and the bus had to wait till the water ran off. Then Johnnie and the passengers would shovel dirt over the worst potholes, ruts and ridges and lurch on their merry way. In the winters, if the passengers complained of the cold (the windows had long since been broken out) Johnnie stopped Old Betsy, passed out hatchets and axes and they would go to work. The resultant firewood made a really nice, warm fire in the bus' stove.

Many times Indians would board the bus for Banning at Mission Creek Road, clambering up on the roof where they, nature lovers all, could enjoy the full blast of fresh air in their faces. After the windows were all broken out, Johnnie did not haul hay on windy days because of the blowing bits of hay and straw which really did bother his passengers, hay fever or not.

He also tells of the time he was delivering a crateful of ducklings from a feed store to one of his lady customers. He loaded the open-air crate on the roof between a stack of boxes and other bundles. The wind blew hard on the way back. Even so, Johnnie was shocked to find that the wind had blown every bit of down off of every duckling. The lady refused them. He recouped his losses by selling them for 25¢ a bald head on a Twentynine Palms street corner; and, he reports, even though every one was absolutely naked, they all grew back their down and feathers and were healthy and in good shape tonsorially speaking.

Another amusing trip involved an afterthought order shouted through the door of Dean's Coffee Shop in Twentynine Palms. "Oh, get me some Kitchen Bouquet," the cook yelled to the departing Johnnie. Hours later he returned

Johnnie Hastie

with a huge bouquet of long-stemmed fresh flowers. The cook blinked, laughed out loud, gladly told Johnnie he'd pay the $3.50 for the flowers and the ten cents for hauling, gleefully told his counter customers he really wanted the bottled sauce and the joke was on Johnnie for many years.

His passengers got used to Johnnie's stopping the bus at odd points to make personal deliveries of some items, perform chores, have a cold drink at a refreshment stand, etc. One time he agreed to care for the animals that belonged to his friends at the Hicks Ranch in Morongo Valley while they were away on a trip. The passengers waited while he fed the dogs, cats and chickens, milked the cow and put the milk in the old ice box. The animals were soon waiting at the fence for Johnnie's arrival — and even after their owners returned they waited at the fence for the familiar bus.

When the Marine Base got active following World War II, Johnnie took on an employee and added an afternoon round trip to Banning. Later he added a local taxi service for which he charged five cents, often allowing his customers to take the taxi themselves, and returning it the next day. He still has the '27 Dodge taxi and it still goes, he said. At one time he operated a big, black, deluxe 7-passenger DeSoto limousine, but he had to give it up and buy another bus in order to carry more customers.

The last three years he was in business he changed the destination point to Palm Springs because so many of his Marine passengers flew into that airport, then had to take a bus to Banning and transfer to his line.

At the time he sold Desert Stage Line, in 1973, to Mrs. Ardella Cook, he had seven modern buses and two taxis in operation. He is now retired but continues to quietly, happily observe the scene. Old Betsy is retired, too, except for an occasional jaunt down the highway in a parade.

Mrs. Cook gave up the taxi service but now has a fleet of ten buses on schedule and employs fourteen people; something Johnnie couldn't have imagined when he chugged into town all those years ago. ■

Yucca Valley Branch Library

The first San Bernardino County Branch Library in the west end of the Morongo Basin was established on July 14, 1934. It was considered one branch but it had two locations—hhe Morongo Valley Grocery Store and the Yucca Valley Inn. Those in charge of those two locations were R. A. Mattinson, Mrs. Belle Lilley and Mrs. Shirley Lawrence. The branch was discontinued in 1944, not because of a lack of interest but because of gas-rationing and other war-time problems.

Happily, in October, 1945, Mrs. Mabel Becker agreed to become the community librarian and re-open the branch—this time in Becker's Variety Store, in Joshua Tree. In 1948, the variety store, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Becker and the branch library moved to and set up shop in Yucca Valley, two doors west of the present MDX Pharmacy.

"We had two shelves of books in the store," said Mrs. Becker. "I was just a custodian, really." However, she was more than that. She kept track and when all the books had been read by all her steady customers and other interested townspeople, she would notify the County Librarian in San Bernardino and soon two-shelves-worth of new books would be brought up and the old ones taken away.

Mrs. Becker truly served all of the community, but her especially avid readers were Jane Lace and son, Thelma Barth and sons, Mrs. Barnhardt, Geraldine Wells, Maude Landgraf and son, Mrs. Swink, Belva Green and daughter, Mary Ford, Howard and Lee Cole and children, the Hardesty family, the Woody Wilson family, Mabel Mellette and Camilla Hudson.

Mrs. Becker continued as the town librarian until 1958, when the branch was moved into a small building in Hi-Desert Park, just south of the Yucca Valley Elementary School.

Librarians who served in the then new facility were Mrs. Helen Key, Mrs. Jessie Seward and Mrs. Sherrill Warren. The latter was still in charge in 1962, when the library was moved into a much-needed larger building in the park. The branch received status for a trained librarian in 1967. When Mrs. Warren moved away, Miss Mary Hugentugler became the branch librarian.

Before and after Miss Hugentugler's retirement as librarian, she worked tirelessly with local and county people on the plans for the newest branch library, which, as part of the Yucca Valley Community Center, was constructed in 1973. She was also one of the founders of the Yucca Valley Chapter of The Friends of the Library. The chapter immediately formed a Library Planning Commission under Miss Mary Young. Miss Hugentugler was succeeded by two interim librarians, Fred Barnes and Mrs. Alice Clark.

Mrs. Mary Crenshaw was the librarian from 1972 to 1975, when she transferred to the Victorville branch. It was during her tenure that the new branch in the center was opened.

Another one who worked very hard on the plans and operations for the center library was Miss Dorothy Traver, County Librarian. More functions and more space had been planned for, originally, but county officials, over the objections of many, made changes and cut down the size of the library. Miss Traver fought for every inch of its existing space.

In 1975, Miss Ardys Asper became the new branch librarian. She retired when she married. In 1979, Miss Barbara Paulson transfered from Victorville and took over as librarian. She resigned to accept a similar position with the Santa Rosa Library.

Then, on February 11, 1980, Rick Erickson, the present librarian, took up the post. He has a paid staff of four: Catherine Chelette, the Joshua Tree Librarian, works at the Yucca Valley branch two days a week; Florence Rayl; Aletha Cox; and Mary Ann Wall. There are also five to eight volunteers ready to help out.

The Yucca Valley Library, which now circulates 2,000 books a month, is part of the Inland Library System. The County Librarian is Miss Barbara Anderson, who replaced Miss Traver when she retired after more than thirty years with the county system.

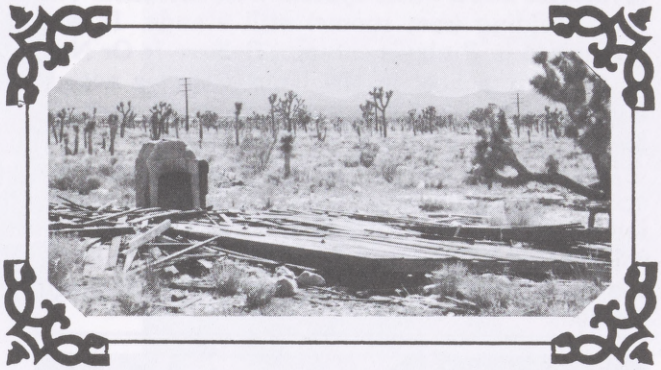
When the Dedication Ceremonies for the Yucca Valley Community Center, and the new library, were held on December 1, 1973, The Friends of the Library hosted a formal tea as their part in the celebration. Prior to that they were very active in their support of Miss Traver and her campaign on behalf of the new structure.

The local chapter was founded in 1968. They hold an annual Book Sale, proceeds of which (along with all donations received) go into various projects. By these supportive methods the Yucca Valley chapter has supplied the patio furniture, the speaker system, a file cabinet, 500 periodical file cases, curtain rod and drapery at the west entrance, two rolodex files, one library hand truck, two library step stools, two periodical subscriptions, materials for the children's programs, "Books in Print," and additional magazine subscriptions.

Also, via the Friends, cash and materials have been received from the Yucca Valley High School "S" Club; Mr. and Mrs. Art Miller, Sr.' the Yucca Valley Kiwanis Club; and Mr. Bob Marinello. ■

Yucca Valley Schools

The very first school in the entire Morongo Basin opened in 1913 when Miss Lena A. Sturdy began teaching nine pupils in a tent pitched under an apricot tree on the Pollard homestead in Morongo Valley. Those children were Gus, Hazel and Charlie Schlicter; Arthur and Raymond Pollard; and Theil, Arol, Glen and Eldon McKinney. The following term a small schoolhouse was built on the Charles Fischbeck homestead. Some of the students rode burros to school and Miss Sturdy, driving a horse and buggy, picked up the others along the way.



ALL THE REMAINS of the Cariker Homestead, where Yucca Valley's first school was held.

THE FIRST school in the Morongo Basin — 1913.

FOUR OF THE school children in Yucca Valley's first school in 1915. They are, left to right, Henry and Dorothy Dutton, Esther Robertson, and Paul Dutton. A pre-school Dutton daughter is in front.

By the fall of 1915, there were enough students in Yucca Valley to start the first school here. Miss Christine Snelling was engaged as the teacher and class was held at the home of John Cariker, near the present-day high school. The fifteen children attending included the three Dutton children, the Robertson's two daughters, the two Snelling boys, the Evans' daughter, the Pearce children, the Cariker children and the Heard children.

In the 1920's classes were conducted in three locations in Pipes Canyon, the last at the Hudson homestead. Once Camilla Hudson, herself, taught the children. The new teacher (obviously a city girl) arrived to start the new school year. She looked around at the remote countryside and went right back to the bright lights. Mrs. Hudson said that she taught until a new teacher could be sent out to take over but that the class time didn't count because she was not certificated. What did count was what the children did learn from this highly educated woman with a tremendous amount of pioneer spirit.

In 1931, once more there were enough children in Yucca Valley to open another school. It was conducted in a little rock building facing what is now Yucca Trail. Wallace Stacey, a homesteader who came to the Hi-Desert in 1923, wanted a larger building than the rock ediface. "During that year I was able to bargain with the County School District to give them two acres of land and furnish one half of the material and all the labor (to be donated by the people of the valley) with the understanding that the new building could be used for community meetings and entertainment," said Mrs. Stacey. "This was agreed upon and work started on the building. Walter Kerr was in charge of the construction.

"The school was furnished with desks and equipment from a school at Yucaipa which had been closed," said Mr. Stacey.

"Later, with the held of a WPA project, lavatories and a water system were installed. The rock building (rest rooms) still stands. It was publicized in Ripley's column, Believe It Or Not, as the only school in the United States with a $300.00 school building and $3,000 rest rooms," he continued.

In 1936, the pride of the community, the new school burned down! "It was a sad day, indeed, for those who had worked so hard to build it," said Mr. Stacey. A still newer school was built by the County at the same site—Yucca and Wamego Trails.

THE OLD school house. Still standing at Wamego and Yucca Trails.

Four eighth grade students at the Yucca Valley school were graduated in May, 1938. They were Robert Redden, Robert Stacey, James Baumer and Richard Pearce. Mrs. Addie Garrison was the teacher. Mr. W.E. Ketcham, a school board member, gave out diplomas.

In the July 21, 1948, issue of the Yucca Valley Star the banner headline read, "7 Room School Building For Yucca Village." The lead story reported that Fred A. Storey, a subdivider of Yucca Village, had donated a fifteen acre tract for the new school. He had been in conference with County school officials in San Bernardino and had been told that "plans and specifications are ready and $112,685 has been allocated for a seven-room school building . . ."

The good news continued that, ". . . Mr. Storey was informed by Building Superintendent Daniels that the money had been allocated June 30 and that work on the first unit of three rooms and the Administration building would be started soon."

Work did get started, but the schedule was slower than many had hoped. In the interim period before the new school was opened, classes were also held in Rev. Eddie Garver's Community Church to ease the over-crowded condition. The teachers for the two schools were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rich.

During construction the only major change in the plans was the elimination of the Administration Building from the first increment. Since the school was to draw its students from a larger area of the west end of the Basin, it was given the name Joshua Monument School.

It opened for its first classes on January 2, 1951, with an enrollment of 120. There were four regular classrooms and a kindergarten. It was the town's first building constructed solely as a school. Howard C. Harmon was the District Superintendent and he was told by the townspeople how very proud they were of the new school and that they felt it had been worth the wait.

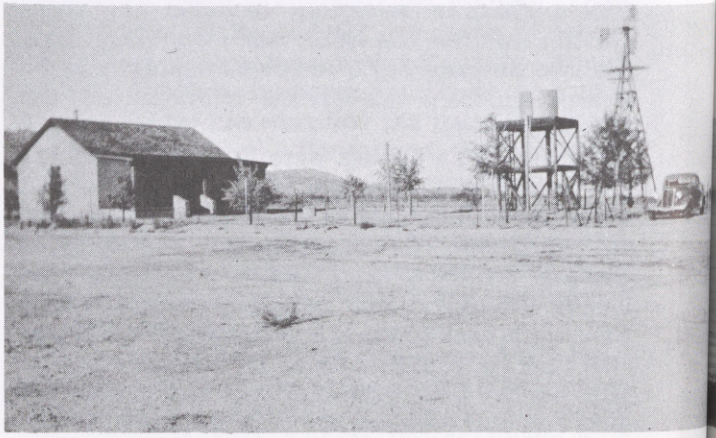
The first teaching staff consisted of Mrs. E. Reed, 1st and 2nd grades; Mrs. Pearl Jones, 3rd and 4th grades; Mr. Paul Meckna, 5th and 6th grades; and Mrs. Ruth Collins, teaching principal and 7th and 8th grades.

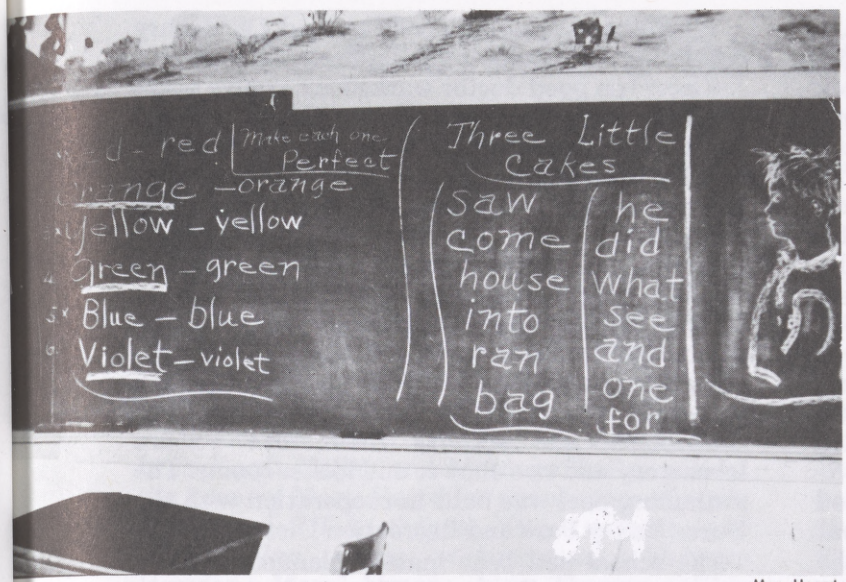
In 1951, the new school's first graduating class included Mary Hardesty (Huff), Opal Stephenson and Ross LeFever.

By September, 1953, the new school was not just bulging, it was overflowing. The 7th and 8th grade classes were moved to the Community Church, the 6th grade met in the old school and the 1st and 2nd grades were on half-day sessions. Construction of four more classrooms and the administration unit were quickly started. The multi-purpose room/cafeteria was added in 1957. By 1958 a school was built and opened in Joshua Tree—and named after the town. To avoid confusion, the name of the Joshua Monument School was changed to Yucca Valley Elementary School. Two more classrooms were added in 1963, built simultaneously with the new Morongo Valley Elementary School.

Following Mrs. Collins, the principals at Yucca Valley Elementary School were, in order: Glenn Hardy, Myrl Ruple, William Greene, Albert Gilbert, Harry Wallman, Louis Millican, Ed Keeley and Ron Sutton. Betty Bilyeu is the current principal.

THE YUCCA VALLEY School in 1938. Beatrice Hicks was the teacher.

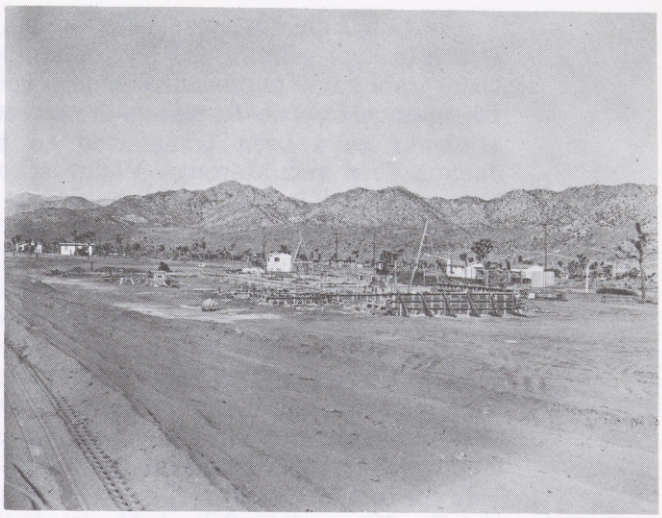




Mary Heard

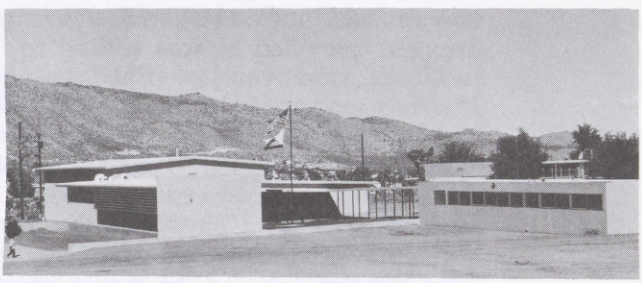
ABOVE — Beyond education this blackboard makes fun of Steve Heard's haircut.

LEFT — Looking across 29 Palms Highway and the old Safeway to the new Yucca Valley High School. The light area, left center. Circa 1960.



YUCCA VALLEY Elementary School under construction.

BELOW — The completed school, with later additions.



OPAL STEPHENSON, Cheryl, Frances, Mary Hardesty, Patricia Scott, Charlotte McCracken, Ruth McCracken, Phil Scott, Johnny Kee, Charles Kee, Roy Kee, Terry, David McCracken. Grades 1 thru 12. Teacher — Amy Beth Warburton.

PICTURE taken where now stands the old Security Bank. Opal Stephenson, David McCracken, Eddie Hardesty, Carol Deland, Zora Stevenson, Pansy Deland, Patricia Scott, Stevenson, Mary Hardesty, Morgan Reche, Donna Reche, Cheryl.

Patricia Edge

THE YUCCA VALLEY School Class in 1949.

Patricia Edge

THE YUCCA VALLEY School Class in 1950.

Additional classes have been added, but the students kept pouring in. By September, 1981, there were 1,059 pupils enrolled at Yucca Valley Elementary School. To relieve the pressure some students have been transferred to both the Joshua Tree and Morongo Valley schools. The best news of all is that, as this book goes to press, ground-breaking ceremonies have been held for the long-awaited Yucca Mesa School. Hopefully, it will be open for classes September, 1985. Also, a separate Intermediate School will be built in Yucca Valley in the near future.

As of the end of January, 1984, at the Yucca Valley Elementary School, there are 33 teachers, two administrative staff members, 45 classified employees and 860 students enrolled.

In the early 1960's Mrs. Joan Wilson contacted the San Bernardino County Health Department to see what could be done to get Salk polio vaccine innoculations for the MUSD students. She was told it could be handled through the local druggist provided he was willing to forego any profit on the vaccine. She contacted Bates Marriott, owner of the Yucca Valley Drug Store, and he willingly agreed to the arrangements.

The county was also to provide a public health nurse and the necessary equipment. The shots were to be $1.00 a piece and the Yucca Valley Women's Club handled the cash transactions.

On the date set for the innoculations none of the local doctors were going to be available to give the shots. Dr. Ann Zachry, a physician with the Riverside County Health Department, lived in Yucca Valley with her retired father, Abner; her son, Michael, one of the local students; and her sister, Mae Baird, owner-operator of the Hi-Desert News Agency. When she heard of the problem, she arranged to take a day off from her job as immunization physician with the Riverside County Schools, and volunteered to give the two series of shots in Yucca Valley.

"Target Day" arrived and everything was going smoothly. Not only students from the west end, but busloads and busloads of Twentynine Palms school children lined up for shots of the highly-prized vaccine. "We had hundreds of them," said Dr. Zachry. With many more students to take care of, Dr. Zachry saw that the supply was rapidly dwindling and informed Mrs. Wilson of the predicament.

Mrs. Wilson called her good and faithful friend, Sheriff Frank Bland. He quickly assigned a deputy sheriff in San Bernardino to pick up additional vaccine at the County Health offices. The precious cargo had to be kept cool, so it was important that it be transported as fast as possible to Yucca Valley. Therefore, with sirens blaring, the deputy sped off to a pre-arranged rendezvous at Whitewater where he met a deputy from the Morongo Basin. He, also turned on the sirens and made a hasty climb into the Hi-Desert.

When the vaccine (still cool) arrived, Dr. Zachry continued to innoculate the children of the basin.

(Later the good doctor worked for twelve years in the Student Health Service at Cal State Long Beach. She then returned to Yucca Valley and she and her sister still live here. Her son is grown, married and in real estate in the community of Alta Loma.)

During the 1961-62 school year the Morongo Unified School District's Board of Education completed plans and construction began on the Yucca Valley Intermediate School. Initial construction costs were $328,000 for a plant which included an administration building, four classrooms, one activity room, one science laboratory and two shower and locker rooms. The swimming pool was built in cooperation with the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District.

The school had been master planned, at that time, to eventually house 750 students, but it was expected that it would open with approximately 170 seventh, eighth and ninth graders.

Ray Garrett was the first principal and James Linehan was the second principal for the school.

Up to this time all upperclassmen had attended Twentynine Palms High School. It was very evident that a second high school was needed, and so, in 1968, the Intermediate School was converted into Yucca Valley High School. More classrooms, a gymnasium, multi-purpose room and other facilities were added. The school colors were gold and black, the athletic teams, which began winning championships and building a good reputation for themselves, were named the Trojans. Naturally, its arch rival is Twentynine Palms High School.

Keith Lee was the first principal at YVHS, followed by Charles L. Van Blair, Ron Prescott, Richard Hollister, and, currently, Ron Sutton.

There are 55 teachers, three administrative staff members, three counselors, seventeen classified employees and, as of the end of the first quarter of 1984, there are 667 high school students and 483 intermediate school students for a total enrollment of 1,150.

Sky High School, with its excellent and successful specialized programs, opened in Yucca Valley in September, 1977. Its teacher principal from the very start has been Tony Della Zoppa. There are four more teachers, two classified employees and one hundred students.

All in all, that's a long way from a tent under an apricot tree! ■

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Grant Allen Kee, father of John G. Kee, Sr., and grandfather of Corky Kee, homesteaded in what is now Pioneertown in 1934. He had homesteaded in Twentynine Palms in 1928.

The Gentle Forces of The P.T.A.

The first west-end P.T.A. chapter was organized in 1947, while the school was still located on the Stacey property on Yucca Trail.

On October 14, a group of concerned ladies from Yucca Valley and Morongo Valley met at the home of Mary Heard for the purpose of starting a local P.T.A. chapter. Those present were Muriel Van Camp (chairwoman), Florence Harmon, Mary Heard, Alta Thomas, Hilda Hardesty, Irene Rich, Frances Hunter, Mrs. Fred Sanders, Mrs. L. Holman and Mrs. Moats. They set a date for the organization meeting and nominated officers. The Hi-Desert newcomers added their impetus to that of the earlier settlers in trying to get more understanding, recognition and assistance from the county.

The organization meeting, under the direction of Mrs. Esther King, president of the Arrowhead 5th District P.T.A., was held on October 29, in the American Legion Hall. By laws were submitted, discussed and adopted.

Starting with 29 parents who were totally dedicated to the education, health and social welfare of their children, the group became an immediate force which created an incidental by-product with its efforts — the improvement of the whole community.

The charter members were Messrs. and Mesdames Don Van Camp, William W. Thomas, William Harmon, Jim Hunter, Melvin Rich, Paul Mercatoris, Ed Hardesty, Cecil Smith, Howard Heard, Floyd Peters, Kenneth Scheurn, Frank Richardson, Preston Holman, Carl DeLand and Mrs. Amy Warburton.

The charter officers elected were: Muriel Van Camp, president; Alta Thomas, vice president; Frances Hunter, secretary; Hilda Hardesty, treasurer; and Marie Smith, auditor. The first appointed chairwomen, who got all the projects underway that primary year, were: Florence Harmon, hospitality; Irene Rich, membership; Marie Smith, program; and Zita Scheurn, finance and budget.

First item on the agenda of the firmly determined group was the campaign to get a full-time, permanent school in Yucca Valley.

According to the historians' records, "Committees were appointed to attend school board meetings and to see the proper officials and demand recognition for a seemingly forgotten community."

The P.T.A. stayed in the lead all during the hard-fought "permanent school" campaign. However, realists all, the chapter voluntarily put in some improvements for the existing school. The next step was to pay for them and other projects the chapter wanted to launch. Fred Storey donated a lot in his subdivision which was sold with proceeds going into the fund. Bill Underhill, owner of the Twentynine Palms Theatre, donated one evening's proceeds to the west-end P.T.A. Fund-raising box socials, pot-luck dinners, bake sales and a Fall Carnival were held.

By it its second year the membership had grown to 38. The officers were Florence Harmon, president; Alta Thomas, vice president; Muriel Van Camp, secretary; Hilda Hardesty, treasurer; and Edith Peters, auditor. Chairwomen were Jo Richardson, hospitality; Margaret LeFever, membership; Dorothy Tunstall, program; Mary Heard, finance and budget; and Eleanor Bayes, publicity.

The energetic mothers also prepared and served hot lunches to the children. The Clothes Closet was established, whereby outgrown items of children's clothing were exchanged. A Halloween Party and other special and holiday parties were given for them. Mary Heard said, "At first there wasn't much to work with, but we did work hard and got quite a bit done for the kids going to the school at the time."

A film projector was the first piece of additional equipment purchased and presented by the P.T.A. to the school. It also sponsored a preschool clinic where mothers brought their babies and young children for shots and physical examinations. Members assisting the county physician and nurse were Doxie Pifer, Beverly Peters, Esther Mercatoris, Eleanor Bayes and the always-on-hand-when-needed Mary Heard and Muriel Van Camp.

At one of the P.T.A.-sponsored programs Dr. E. Dingle, of Mentalphysics, gave a very interesting lecture on his personal travel experiences, "Through China On Foot." The money raised bought playground equipment for the school.

In another program, Mrs. Wasserburger, of Twentynine Palms, gave a talk on "The Habit of Saving." The P.T.A. adopted and sponsored a children's savings project for the year. Each week the children would bring their savings to school where it was collected by a member of the Joshua

Monument National Bank. Every child kept his own savings book and it was reported that much interest (both kinds) was generated toward learning good savings habits.

The Christmas Bazaar, featuring lots of holiday decorated booths, festive greenery, games and much food, especially piping hot chili and hamburgers, produced the largest amount of money earned that year.

The following month Lillian Rich proposed a hot soup program. It was adopted and the P.T.A. mothers, rotating turns, cooked homemade soups and served them to the school children for lunch during the chilly winter.

It was a happy occasion and nobody celebrated more than the P.T.A. when it was announced in mid-July, 1948, that a new school was going to be built in Yucca Valley and serve that community, Joshua Tree, Morongo Valley, Pioneertown and Sun Valley. Since this consolidation not only gathered in the children but also joined the Yucca Valley and Joshua Tree P.T.A.'s, both the new school and the expanded chapter became the Joshua Monument School and P.T.A. This also changed some of the by-laws.

As the new school opened in 1951, the P.T.A., now 187 strong, continued with fund-raising ideas, gifts and services to the school and the children. The chapter's project for the year was a free milk program for needy children. A P.T.A. Spring Carnival was quite successful and added $116 to the chapter treasury.

The next biggest event of 1951, however, was the special P.T.A. Float entered in the very first Grubstake Days Parade. On board as the featured attraction was almost the entire student body plus a big sign declaring, P.T.A. — Families Are Our Business." It won a blue ribbon.

THE 1951 prizewinning P.T.A. Float in the first Grubstake Days Parade.

LO-RENA HUMPHREVILLE

Among the entertainment highlights at the regular P.T.A. meetings was the Magic Show put on for Halloween, 1952, by Twentynine Palms High School student, Peter Young, assisted by Kenn Witting, a professional magician now retired and living in Yucca Valley.

The children's Glee Club and the P.T.A. Mothersingers entertained often; in later years so did the P.T.A. Fathersingers. While the meetings were always very interesting, informative and entertaining, there were three outstanding presentations over the years and one "more than memorable" get-together.

The first of the three was "The Tom Thumb Wedding," presented in June, 1950, and starring all the younger children. Nancy Garver was the bride; Teddy Miller, the groom; Allen Barth, the preacher; Frankie Heard, best man; Carol Heard, maid of honor; Margaret Tunstall, bride's mother; Ronald Ash, bride's father; Tyna English, groom's mother; Alex Jonsson, groom's father; Susie Garver, Sandra Harmon and Jane Miller, bridesmaids; Johnnie Ash, ring bearer; Sally and Donna Jeffcott, flower girls; and Jackie Stephenson and Ted Phoenix, ushers. It was the first major school stage production and it garnered a tremendous ovation and kept tongues wagging for months.

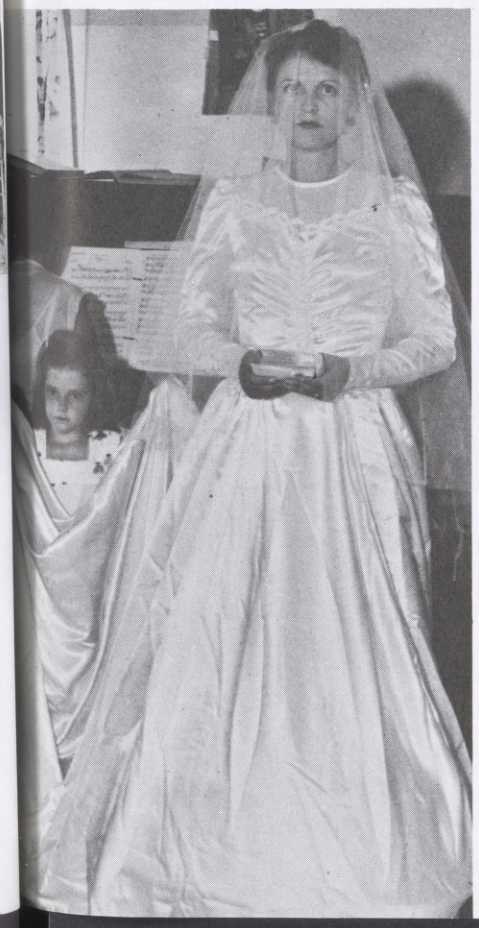
KEN WITTING

THE TOM THUMB Wedding presented in 1950.

The second was the Arrowhead 5th District Meeting, hosted for the first time by the Joshua Monument P.T.A., on November 21, 1952. The meeting was held at Mentalphysics with Mrs. C.W. Henry, district president, presiding. Other district speakers were Mesdames W.J. Stanton, Howard Burkhart, Harry Fabun and Russell Scott. A special guest was Col. Burton Thrall, County Superintendent of Schools.

THE GALLERY of photographs from P.T.A. activities are pictures of the "Fashion Through the Years" show, as well as pictures of the children's activities (left to right).

1. *Diane Urmstom and Kathy Bendall modeling Marie Odgers' wedding gown of 1934.*
2. *Shotgun Wedding Playet: Frankie Heard, Sandi Harmon, Tyna English.*
3. *Gown modeled by Laurel Martin belonging to her mother in which she eloped back in 1895.*
4. *Opal Horton modeling wedding gown belonging to Mrs. Glenn Harper 1947.*
5. *Sherry Griswold modeling wedding gown of Sophie Duval, 1936 style.*
6. *Mary Heard and Joni Haworth modeling negligee and nighties—1916 style, belonging to Mrs. Oley Hanson.*



The luncheon was served at the Community Clubhouse on Yucca Trail. Here the local ladies outdid themselves in producing delicious culinary delicacies from start to finish for 135 guests. Programs were mounted on pieces of Joshua tree wood donated by Mr. Meyers. The cover was a picture of a Joshua tree drawn by Jennie V. Emlong. There were matching name tags. Place cards were tiny cacti in sand, with a pick and a rock and the slogan: "I came to the desert to dig for precious stones and found health."

The "memorable" get-together took place in March, 1953. It was a "Come As You Are" Breakfast Party, hosted by Dorothy Tunstall. There were 24 surprised members rounded up and chauffered by Mesdames Papendick, Hammett, English and Odgers. Some were barefoot, most were in robes and some were caught still in bed. Since everyone "had her hair down" the members relaxed and consumed lots of waffles, sausages and hot coffee. Vi Ray and Mrs. Nieberger won prizes (for being fully dressed?).

The third special presentation was the "Fashions Through The Years" program for Founders' Day, in February, 1961. Under the co-chairmanship of Pat Cummins, for Yucca Valley; and Gloria Amrine, for Joshua Tree; a spectacular wedding dress fashion show was held. It featured many beautiful wedding gowns which had been packed away in trunks, in some cases for several generations. The showing was greatly appreciated and well worth all the effort.

As the years went along the busy chapter continued to serve the school and children by holding all the holiday and special parties, carnivals, book-fairs and open houses. It also held welcoming teas for the teachers; prepared and served refreshments at each meeting; put on skits of its own and encouraged the children to put on skits and musical programs; sponsored a Blue Bird Girl Scout Troop, a Camp Fire Girls Troop and a Brownie Girl Scout Troop; sponsored a popular series of teen-age dances at the American Legion Hall; arranged a summer recreation program for the children to be held at the Yucca Valley Community Church and obtained twice-a-week school bus transportation to the Twenty-nine Palms swimming pool at Luckie Park; annually distributed Christmas Baskets for needy families; and each year entered a beautifully designed and decorated float for the Grubstake Days Parade.

One September Mrs. Ed Katzorke, hospitality chairwoman, in a welcoming gesture placed a beautiful flowering plant on the desk of the principal and each teacher. The members were also very active in making and distributing 700 copies of a brochure and 40 posters for a school bond election. And, of course, they were also deeply involved in each of the Founders' Day observances.

Through their diligence in raising money they were able to purchase band instruments, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, outdoor benches and get a small school library started.

The money was loyally donated at such fund-raisers as the regular potluck dinners, bake sales, monthly hot dog sales, Spring and Fall/Halloween Carnivals, bunco game parties, Hobo Hop parties, Pick-Up Brunches and a variety of specialized programs.

They instituted a circulating food basket/piggy bank project where a member received a basket with a home-baked pie, cake or cookies — and the piggy bank. She took the pie, paid her money, added her own baked items and gave the basket to another member. Also, the P.T.A. always had food booths at the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days and the Joshua Tree Turtle Races where the members cooked and served hamburgers, hot dogs, baked goods and beverages. In 1948, the Junior Class at Twentynine Palms High School staged its play and dance and split the proceeds with the fledgling P.T.A. chapter which had sold coffee, doughnuts and pop at the dual events.

Those first two presidents, ably assisted by their fellow officers and the general membership, were ground-breakers and movers and shakers that set the pattern for those who followed. Taking up the president's gavel with the same spirit were the Mesdames Clay Tunstall, 1949-'50; William Downing, 1950; John Weaver, 1950-'51; Harvey Odgers, '51-'53; Glenn Hammett, '53-'54; Robert Jernberg, '54-'55; Edna Burns, '55-'56; Herbert Reed, '56-'57; William Amrine, '57-'58; Robert Schoenleber, '58-'60; John Arch, '60-'61; Albert Gilbert, '61-'62; Nan Marble, '62-'63; and Martin Bohla, '63-'64.

THE P.T.A. Fatherswingers of 1962. They are Gary LaVoie, Wayne Maiefski, Welling Clark, Jr. Jim Ishmael, George Osborn, Randy Smith, Bob Nordyke and Jim Riggs.

Other ladies who served as president were Mesdames Elsie Howell, Edward Commentz, Mary Gerpheide, Jerry Ducey, Charles Buckles, Dolly Nordyke, Mary Presley, Charlene Etherton, Nadine Laird, Barbara Childs, Peggy Buresh, H. Welling Clark, Jr., James Ishmael, Ray Atherton and Richard Cleland.

Obviously, all recipient of the Honorary Life Membership in the California Congress of Parent-Teacher Associations are deserving of the award, but it was a very emotional and extremely gratifying experience for the entire group when Ruth English, in 1955, and Florence Harmon, in 1956, became the Joshua Monument P.T.A.'s first two honorees.

Their faithful and outstanding service, their tireless efforts and total dedication were achknowledged in this, the highest honor the P.T.A. can bestow. They were also presented with HLM pins and cards indicating their awards at the two Founders' Day programs. Mrs. M. Brooks Buxton was chairwoman of the latter Founders' Day program and presented a play "Order In The Court" which starred Mesdames Agnes Rhead, Maryle Buckles, Eva Katzorke, Wayne Peters, Buxton and Mr. Glenn Hardy.

Succeeding worthy recipients of Honorary Life Memberships for the Elementary School P.T.A. were: Mesdames Marie Odgers, 1957; Charlsie Peters, '58; Beatrice Hicks, '59; Nan Marble, '60; Leona King, '61; Mr. Roy Roush, '62; Mesdames Pearl Jones, '64; Margaret Gilbert, '65; Margaret Schoenleber and Virginia Dickson, '66; Lillian Clark, '67; Betty Gastineau, '68; LoMae Ducey, '69; Mary Gerpheide, '70; Twila Couzens, '71; Charlene Etherton, '72; Marian Lee, '73; Mary Presley and Mr. Louis Millican, '74; Mesdames Brenda Cubitt, '75; Charlene Etherton and Mr. Al Gilbert, '76; Ann Zimmerman and Mr. Earl Pealstrom, '77; and Mesdames Jackie Pulliam, '78; and Joy Stoops, '79.

Those receiving the coveted award for the Yucca Valley Intermediate School and Yucca Valley High School P.T.A. were: Mary Ishmael, '67; Dolly Nordyke, '68; Hazel Miller, '69; Mr. Robert Miner, '70; Mr. James Ishmael, '72; Mr. Wayne Gaw and Mr. Douglas Moyer, '73; Dorothy Hill, '74; Mr. H. Welling Clark, '75; Elva Richman, '76; Mr. Jerry Ducey, '77; Mr. Dave Cubitt, '78; and Mr. Gordon Etherton, '79. Mr. Harry Wallman was given Special Recognition in 1967; and, in 1975, Mrs. Roberta Stiles was named for both the Elementary and the High School.

A most special mention should be made commending the P.T.A. Historians who, from the very beginning, kept such excellent, meticulous records and copies of pictures and programs and made such concise comments. They were: Frances Hunter, Florence Harmon, Eleanor Bayes, Jean Arch, Nan Marble, Mrs. Alex Jonsson, Jennie Emlong, Josephine Smith, Leona Gholson,

LEFT TO RIGHT: Nan Marble, Roy Roush, Mrs. Robt. Howell and Al Gilbert. Roy Roush receiving lifetime award — 1962.

Maryle Buckles, Ruth Duarte, Esther Wallman, Beatrice Gastineau, Betty McFarlane, Joy Williams, Vera Potter, Margaret Gilbert, Mary Ishmael, Coletta Kirvan, Gloria McCollum, Dorothy Denbow, Lynda Carpenter, Mary Gerpheide, Maxine Muff, Pat Welte and Mesdames Joe Wilson, Arlie Prater, Jack Granfield, William Lee, Bernard Wilson and Herbert Reed.

In 1958 Jean Arch, in a repeat performance as Historian, summed up the entire year in fluent and witty verse.

In more recent years the local chapters fell on troubled times. Like so many other school chapters all over California, the Yucca Valley Elementary School P.T.A. was more than willing to share its "kitty" but was deeply resentful of the ever-increasing amount of money it was forced to send to the State Congress. None of it was ever returned for the benefit of the local children or the school. In one instance, it had to send off 95% to the state.

The chapter was unable to do what it wanted to do with only five per cent left out of all the hard-earned money it had raised. So, in 1982 it withdrew from the P.T.A. and organized a Family Faculty Association chapter. Mrs. Dora Poland is its president. It has continued with most of the same fund-raising projects, as before, especially the Halloween Carnival, but now all the money stays with the school to help the local children. The new chapter has already raised $12,000 for the school library.

The Yucca Valley High School's Parent-Teacher-Student Association is no more, according to Mrs. Poland, who has children in both schools and is active on both campus'. As this book goes to press the former membership is planning to form a Family Faculty Association chapter. Since most of the extracurricular school activities have their own fund-raising support systems, the new FFA chapter is expected to be more of an advocate group. It will be attending school board meetings and acting as a watchdog . . . ! Yes, you're right — after almost 40 years, the same kind of worried parents have come full circle and will be repeating the actions of that very first chapter!! ■

Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge

The route through Pioneer Pass was well-known and much used by the early-day miners and cattle ranchers right up into the 1940's. By the 1920's there were other people who saw that improved passage through the high desert mountain pass would be a good and mighty convenient thing. Thus a dream was first conceived and they called it the Camino D'Oro Highway.

It was to be a paved two-lane State Highway connecting Highway 99 (now Interstate 10) and Phoenix, Arizona, by way of Twentynine Palms. Starting at Redlands, it was to go up into the mountains by Forest Home and Bartlett Flats, then down the other side into the High Desert to the Twentynine Palms Road by one of three alternate routes. One route was through Big Morongo Canyon down into Morongo Valley; a second was through Pipes Canyon and into Yucca Valley; and the third was through Pioneer Pass down through what became Rimrock and Pioneertown and on into Yucca Valley. After connecting with the Twentynine Palms Road at that point, the Camino d'Oro Highway was to continue eastward through present-day Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms to the Colorado River where it was to connect, near Parker, with its Arizona counterpart into Phoenix. A short branch was to go from Twentynine Palms to Amboy. The enthusiastic supporters formed the Three-Mile Road Association, the first civic group to try to influence San Bernardino County and Sacramento into carrying out the Camino D'Oro plans.

In 1935, the State did surface the Twentynine Palms Road from the old turnoff near Whitewater to the San Bernardino County line in Dry Morongo Canyon—a distance of approximately twelve miles. This was accomplished through the lobbying efforts of the Southern California Automobile Club and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce working right along with Ed Malone and the High Desert groups; especially the Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms Boy Scouts Troops which camped out and conducted the car counting over a period of days and nights.

However, in the last half of the 1930's the Camino D'Oro project, as a State Highway, was halted when Sacramento selected instead a section of road in the Tehachapi area for paving and adopting into the State Highway System. Naturally, there was bitter disappointment but, even though the project was set aside, the enthusiasm and determination was preserved for a later time.

PIONEER LOOP ASSOCIATION PLA 1966-67

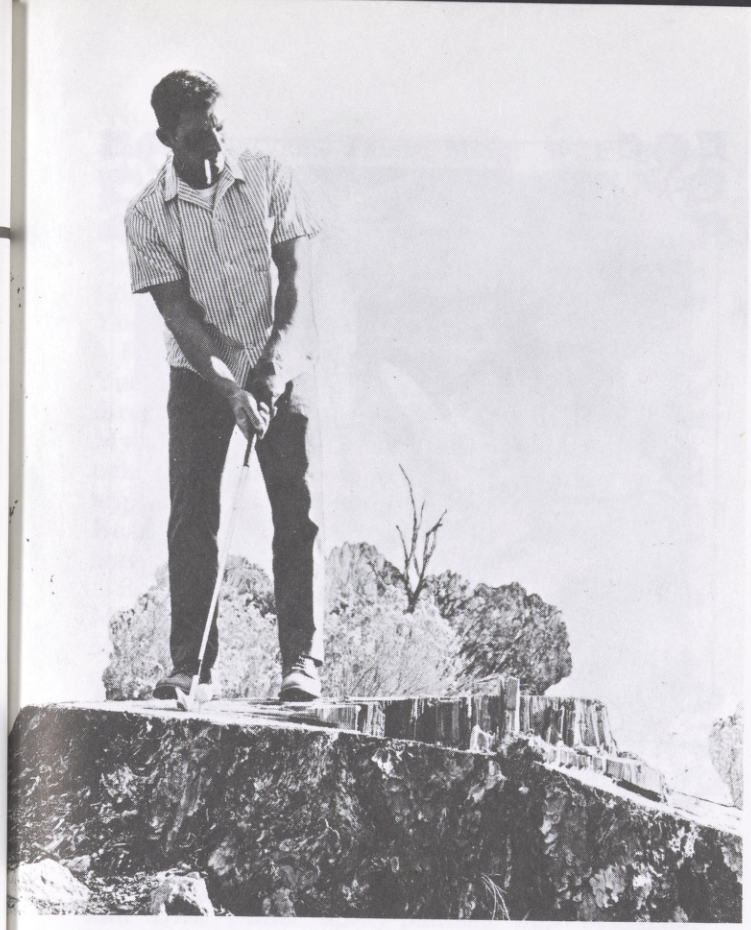
PIONEER LOOP Association Logo created by Kirk Martin in the mid '60s.

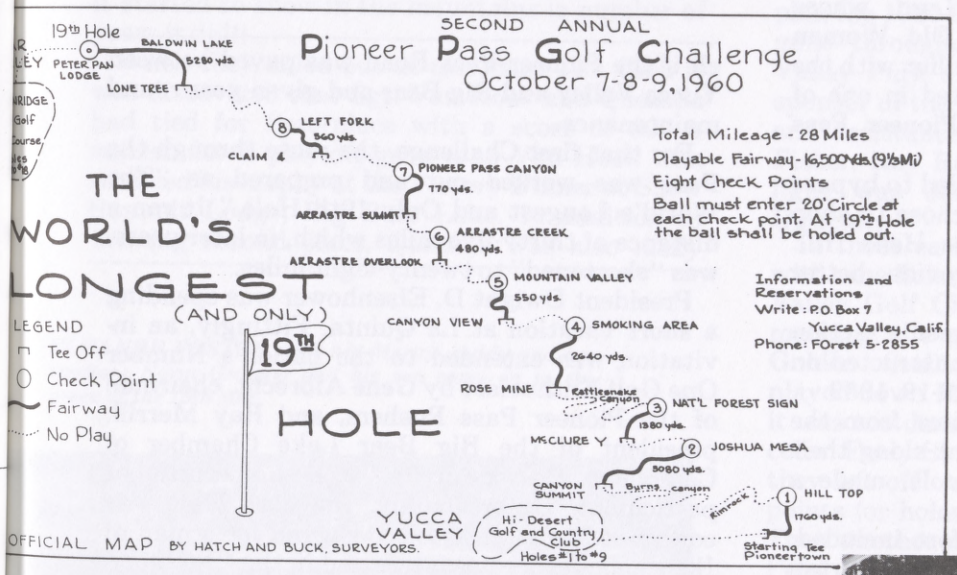
From 1947 until its demise, the Pioneertown Corporation worked on the Camino d'Oro project, promoting the Burns Canyon route. The corporation hired road crews to cut a passable road for cars and trucks through Burns Canyon from Rimrock to the Rose Mine, connecting there with an existing dirt road to Baldwin Dry Lake. This was the beginning of the present Pioneer Pass Road to Big Bear. The road was open to traffic in 1948. However, every bad rainstorm did some damage to the unpaved road.

The new Burns Canyon road bypassed the hairpin curves up the cliff of Rattlesnake Canyon at Devil's Gate, which for years had been used by miners to reach their mines in the Mound Springs and and Antelope Valley areas. The Devil's Gate road was so steep that most drivers were forced to back up the cliff as their cars just wouldn't make it to the top when going forward. The ride down the cliff was a real thrill!

The Villa de Vista organization, in Twentynine Palms, also backed the highway project throughout the 1940's; and, in 1951, it also did

THE PIONEER PASS Golf Challenge offers new risks and hazards each year. Who would expect a loose bull to effect the hazard on the hole.





UPPER LEFT — Gene Hardesty tees off from an unusual tee, typical of Pioneer Pass. UPPER RIGHT, the Big Bear Golf Clubhouse. Start of the Pioneer Pass Golf challenge. ABOVE, one of the check points of the world's longest and playable 19th hole. LEFT, map of the second Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge. BELOW, left and right shows some of the terrain and conditions that confront the golfer on the Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge.

more than just write letters. The members themselves hacked out 1,300 feet of road construction for the cause. Also, at about this time, a group of local citizens, hoping to have Pioneer Pass paved for tourist travel, arranged with the always cooperative Marine Base at Twentynine Palms to have Marine road crews work on the road. They widened and straightened it in spots and cut a new section which bypassed the Cottonwoods.

By the late 1950's the Pioneer Pass Push had been organized in Yucca Valley. On March 21, 1959, the Push's engineers—Pat Sullivan, from the Public Works Office at the Marine Base, and Victor De Kalb, representing the San Bernardino National Forest—held a field meeting with their crew chiefs at the Rose Mine. The crew chiefs—Push volunteers all—were Don Boatman, C. H. Valentine, Ted Morton, Rex Hamilton, Randolph Smith, Corky Kee, Lou Holland and Bill Cone, of Yucca Valley; Gene Albrecht, Sunfair; Hugh Thompson, Morongo Valley; Ben Mitchell and Whitey Barker, Pioneertown; Larry Bunch, Van Nuys; Armen Gamperling, Joshua Tree; and the 4-H Club of Sunfair.

Special crewmen were John Kee, Sr., of Pioneertown; and Jack Lucas, of Big Bear, who served as powder men. A special guest at the Rose Mine meeting was Hardy Lord, whose father once owned the ranch at Old Woman Springs. The younger Lord was familiar with the terrain and route having participated in one of the spring cattle drives through Pioneer Pass when he was sixteen.

These engineers, also, wisely decided to bypass Rattlesnake Canyon and, instead, chose to chop out a mountainside route on Three Hells Hill. This new detour would also provide better drainage for the road.

Each of the crew chiefs was assigned a section of the new portion of road to be constructed on Pioneer Pass Push Weekend, April 18-19, 1959.

On that weekend volunteer workers from the High Desert and mountains brought along their own food and, using their own tools, made a mighty improvement in the road.

Equipment used in the good effort included: Graders—Bil Schmidt, Pioneertown; and Burton Ready Mix, Big Bear. Tractors—Vern Backs, W. H. Smithson and Moonridge Estates, Big Bear; and Hi-Desert Concrete, Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms. Skip Loaders—Big Bear Disposal and Daugherty Excavations, Big Bear.

With the blush of success still on their cheeks, the Pioneer Pushers planned an event that was (and also grew into) one of the most unique athletic contests in the history of golfdom. They planned and staged what became The First Annual Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge. It was held on October 2-3-4, 1959. The purpose was not just to play golf—it was to focus attention on the many benefits and conveniences to be derived by

NORM GRANGER, First chairman of the Pioneer Pass Pushers is erecting directional signs for players. He is being assisted by his wife Dorothy and his Mother.

all if the Pioneer Pass Road was paved between Yucca Valley and Big Bear and given year-round maintenance.

For that first Challenge, the route through the Pass was worked out and prepared as "The World's Longest and Only 19th Hole." It ran a distance of thirty-five miles which, in later years, was "shortened" to twenty-eight miles.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower was spending a short vacation at La Quinta. Fittingly, an invitation was extended to the nation's Number One Golf Enthusiast by Gene Albrecht, chairman of the Pioneer Pass Pushers, and Ray Merrill, president of the Big Bear Lake Chamber of Commerce. He was invited to be a spectator or participant. Unfortunately, the 19th Hole was considered to be a little too rugged for a man of Ike's age, but he was interested in the PPGC and its parent road project and was with the golfers in spirit.

Actually, those first intrepid golfers—thirteen men and two women—really did brave the unknown. The Pushers knew, but with the golfers no one knew what was ahead for them or what might be over the next hill (or half a mountain peak)!

Those fifteen courageous souls were Evelyn Betterley, Warren and Delores Smithson and Dave Goldsmith, from Big Bear Lake; Paul Compan and John Kierstead, Big Bear City; Alvin McDaniels, Coronado; Jimmie Hancock, San Bernardino; Victor Santa Maria and Howard

Done, Twentynine Palms; M/Sgt. W. E. Jones and Sgt. E. R. Van Hook, Twentynine Palms Marine Base; Steve Quezada and S/Sgt. Willis S. Bowman, Jr., of Barstow. A very disappointed Seymour Black, of Monterey Park, was unable to finish the tournament which "had the tee in Yucca Valley and the cup in Big Bear."

Part-way up the mountain the ladies of the Yucca Valley Community Service Club, under the direction of Jessie Crawford, Helen Harper and Myrtle Tripodo, provided delicious sandwiches, cake, coffee and soft drinks to the hungry and appreciative 19th Hole players and entourage. Rex Hamilton, of Morongo Valley, furnished free transportation.

Roving field judges were Bob Schoenleber, Ben Mitchell and Cap Hite. Gene Albrecht, Jerry Moore and Dick Miller, of the Pushers, were up, down, in and around the course throughout the tournament.

Sheriff's Reserve Deputies Ernie Peters and Hap Rigby were on hand. So was Ranger Al George, of the San Bernardino National Forest. Walkie-talkies were used all along the mountain course.

The week before the Challenge Paul Greswit and Dick Miller spray-painted well over five hundred golf balls. They painted them red in case it started to snow in the mountains (a number of years it did!)

When they holed out at the Peter Pan Club it was discovered that Sgt. Van Hook and Quezada had tied for first place with a score of 80. A sudden-death play-off gave it to Van Hook who received his trophy at the Victory Dinner at Snow Summit Lodge, Big Bear Lake. In addition to winning second place, Quezada was also lucky enough to find a $20.00 bill lying in the sand along the route. From the look of it, it had been in the desert sun for a least eight to ten months—but it was still legal tender.

ELEANOR FOSTER with her Marine caddy and her spotters Norm Granger and his son come on to the green at the 19th hole.

1960 — A Pot Luck Dinner supporting Pioneer Pass. L to R: Irene Fox, Mr. and Mrs. Wiles, next couple unknown, Norm Granger, Magna Lawson, county supervisor.

All of those first participants were eager to plan the 1960 Challenge and that's the way it has gone throughout the years. Later the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District was a co-sponsor of the zany event and much cooperation and assistance was given by Mr. and Mrs. Al Fisher, Roy Roush and Art Chase. The guiding light was Jerry Moore, then Park District Director.

In those earlier years the tournament started with nine holes of conventional golf at the Yucca Valley Golf Club on a Friday. Early Saturday morning the golfers tee'd off in front of The Golden Stallion Restaurant in Pioneertown, played down Mane Street and on up the Pass till it was too dark to see the ball—red or any other color. Early Sunday morning they started where they left off. Altogether, there were eight check points (or holes) to be played through the Pass. Then another nine holes of conventional golf at Peter Pan.

In later years the course was reversed and 19th Hole play started early Saturday morning with the tee in front of the Big Bear City Hall and the golfers playing down the mountainside. Either way it's a tough, rugged course up and down mountains and steep hills and all participants treat each other forever more like veterans of big military battles and, while overlooking the blisters and aching muscles, have crazy stories to relate to one another.

The PPGC winners, who have to be some of the best, most dedicated golfers in the world are: Eugene Van Hook, 1959; Dave Taylor, 1960; Dick Runkle, 1961-62; Ed Hardesty, 1963; Les Mer-

catoris, 1964; Hardesty, 1965-66-67; Allan Ward, 1968-69; Hardesty, 1970; Harvey Huff, 1971; George Doherty, 1972; Dick Steinbaugh, 1973; Huff, 1974; Joe Le Maire, 1975; Jack Harrington, 1976; John Goehring, 1977; Pat Toy, 1978; Winston Bullock, 1979; Hardesty, 1980; and Bill Toy, 1981.

Dr. Richard Nahhas was the PPGC chairman for many years during the 1960's. Past chairmen, starting back in 1971, have been Ralph Mick, Midge Potter, Ed Hobbs, Darrell Oveson, Jerry Paulsen, Larry Fine, Larry Davis, Bjarne Jonsson, Joe LeMaire and, again, Mick.

In the mid-1960's the San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department included the Pioneer Pass in its Master Plan. This was the biggest step and the most encouragement yet! Early in 1966, the Pioneer Loop Association was formed with member groups from the towns included in the Loop and adjacent to it. The PLA's territorial spread was within the circle of valley, mountain and desert areas of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. Local Artist Kirk Martin created a very fitting insignia for the PLA. The organization sparked interest in all of the effected towns and it was considerably more active then than in more recent years.

The PLA was formed for the explicit purpose of promoting tourism and informing the general public of Southern California that within this loop lies some of the finest territory anywhere for all types of recreation such as hiking, rock-climbing, horse back riding, fishing, hunting, rock hunting, bird watching and nature study, painting, photography, model plane flying, kite flying, skiing, ice skating, sledding, tobogganing, swimming, boating, camping, picnicking and, of course, playing golf on the famous 19th Hole!

Norman Granger, one-time president of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce, wrote an impassioned plea in the 1961 Grubstakes Days brochure. In it he pointed out the shorter distance in miles that Big Bear and all the mountain areas would be to the lower desert and Morongo Basin communities if the Pioneer Pass Road were paved and open all year. He also noted the shorter travel time and how this would appeal to so many people throughout all of Southern California. (Nowadays the saving in gasoline and money is another big factor.)

Some of the regular PPGC golfers have said they no longer want the road paved or improved because then the tournament would be ended and they would miss all the fun. Someone else suggested the game could then be played annually to commemorate the time the Federal, State and County Governments got together and cooperated on a single project rather than pass the traditional buck! ■

NORM GRANGER and Bud Stewart of the Chamber of Commerce are shown putting in the first Pioneer Pass Road sign in 1959.

OBVIOUSLY! Even the rugged terrain of the 19th hole attracted a crowd in 1959. Below is one of the check points.

Blue Skies Country Club

In early 1956, three property-owning men from Orange County-Yucca Valley started the ball rolling (pun intended) on a venture that was to provide numerous hours of leisure-time enjoyment to many, many people living in and out of the Morongo Basin.

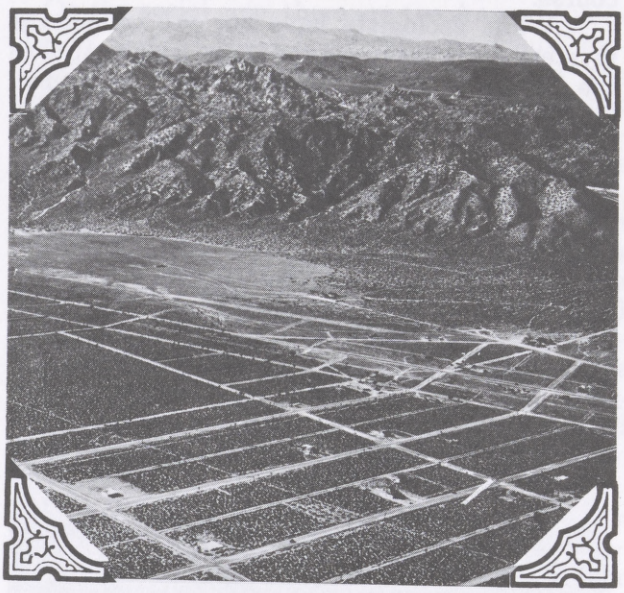
The three partners, all of whom had succumbed to the beautiful-climate-wide-open-spaces siren song of Yucca Valley, were J.W. "Wes" Yale, Sr., a Yorba Linda contractor; Art Roux, the then golf pro at the Irvine Coast Country Club, Corona del Mar; and John Martell, Santa Ana attorney. The partnership embarked upon the creation of the fledgling Hi-Desert Golf & Country Club.

The property and the future course (located in the northwest corner of the valley floor) were surveyed and designed in the latter part of 1955, by William P. Bell & Sons, a Pasadena golf course architectural firm nationally recognized in its field. Up to that point in time it had designed the Santa Ana Country Club and Irvine Coast Country Club among the many other top-notch Southern California clubs and courses.

According to Mrs. Thelma Martell, widow of one of the partners, the actual construction of the original nine-hole course began in February, 1956. "We rented heavy road-building equipment to come up to Yucca Valley and dig the lake. This was the first thing done on the course." she said.

Very shortly after the start of the project Col. Andrew W. Smith, a medical doctor and former City Councilman of Corona del Mar, wrote of his first impressions in his column, "Col. Andy says...," a feature of "The Ensign," the local newspaper. He wrote about, "...my surprising sight which met me as I topped the last rise and started the gentle descent into Yucca Valley. I saw a battery of 'rain birds' — big rotating sprinklers — and a water hazard on a golf course under construction."

Col. Smith continued his praise of the area. "Here in this 3,400-foot elevation is a plateau, a valley surrounded on all sides by mountains, and its climatic conditions are out of this world, for certain. Afflictions that beset us old folks, especially arthritis, aren't for the folks up here. These natives now doing a days work will tell you they came up here on crutches or even on a stretcher. It sounds somewhat plausible to me, a medical man. The rainfall is practically nil, the humidity zero." (EDITOR'S NOTE: In those days the humidity average was between 5-8% and it was considered to be a New York City-type of dripping heat wave if the humidity rose to 15-20% on any summer day.)



IN this 1946 Aerial photograph, the location of the Golf Course can be seen at left center although the golf course wouldn't be started for 10 years.

"Vegetation consists of yucca, joshua trees, a species of sage, juniper in the foothills," said Col. Smith. "...There are no allergy irritants, unless it is the juniper berry, although it seems to me that during the days of bath-tub gin, I knew a feller who claimed it wasn't the alcohol that gave him rubber legs, but the juniper in it. Guess that would be an allergy all right."

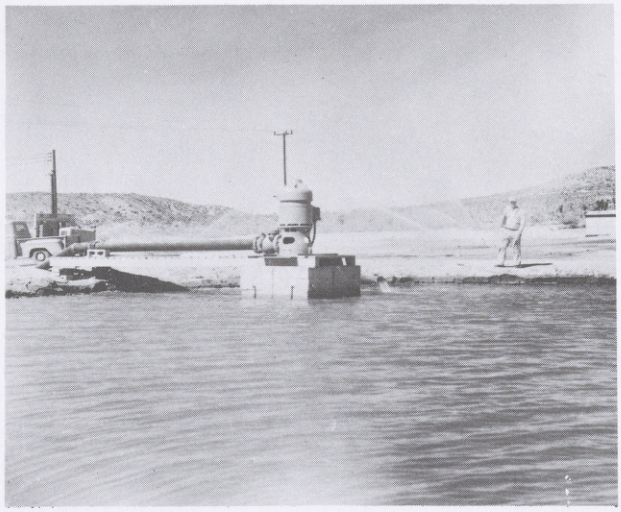
Still another very important aspect of the course's development was a water supply. In the June 24, 1956, edition of "The Santa Ana Register," it was reported, "Evidence that the source of water supply is virtually unlimited is

10 YEARS LATER. The golf course under construction.

Thelma Martell

given in the fact that the developers have dug and filled a lake on the site of the club and have installed 35,000 feet of pipe to carry water to irrigate the fairways and greens of the golf course.

"...While geologists have not yet solved the mystery of the source of the water which supplies the Hi-Desert club," the news story continued, "it is believed that a subterranean pool has been tapped which is supplied from water condensed underground. Martell pointed out that, were the supply fed from mountain streams and melting snows, the water would contain a high proportion of minerals and salts. Tests... show, however, that the water is almost entirely free from minerals, much as distilled water is mineral free, indicating that the source is not from infiltration through mountainous areas.



THE FIRST PUMP, in place — 1956. Since it was installed the well has not dropped in level more than a few feet.

ABOVE, Note the lack of trees on the new Yucca Valley Golf Course, about 1958. BELOW, an aerial view of the golf course taken about the same time.

"Whatever; the source, it is apparant from the fact that the club has facilities for pumping 1,500,000 gallons of water daily which makes no appreciable down-draft in the wells, that a vast supply of water is available." (EDITOR'S NOTE: It was reported by Ray Hapsburg, a local resident and officer and member of the club since its inception, that the well, which was installed in the beginning phase, has not gone down in water level even three feet.)

Mrs. Martell said that, in those early days of developing the course, she and her husband, Johnnie, and Mrs. Hazel Yale would go wading in the lake at sundown. Sharing the cooling waters and tranquillity with the homing and transient water-fowl, they soon noticed that the aches and pains in their tired feet and legs had vanished. (Suggesting a whole new industry for Yucca Valley!)

The course opened for play on October 6, 1956. Brig. Gen. A.G. McFarland, of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base, was low scorer on opening day with a 78. He birdeyed the first hole after coming out of a trap, it was reported. Another first-day golfer was J.A. McDonald, of Baldwin Park, who eagled the 320-yard second hole. The Twentynine Palms MCB's Welfare and Recreation Department made good use of the Morongo Basin's first golf course for all those aboard the base who were interested in the sport.

Also in those first years, a small pro-shop and snack bar was built at the very east end of the fairway.

Then, in 1964, Carder and Ron Livingston bought the property, added the second nine holes to the course and built the clubhouse on the western edge of the fairway. Roger Lenhardt was the golf pro. The clubhouse quickly became the leading social center for the Hi-Desert.

One of the regular happenings (if they were both free) was the daily afternoon round of golf between Johnnie Martell and Father Edward Creighton, then pastor of St. Mary's of the Valley Catholic Church. Father Creighton received a lot of goodnatured kidding about his golf game from all the other players and observers.

The popular priest was much appreciated by the local citizenry and, in August, 1966, when he was transferred to St. Mary's Catholic Church, in El Centro, he was given a huge Farewell Party at the club. The informal and laughter-filled

program was emcee'd by Ray Hapsburg. The affair was one of the best-attended events in the club's history. The golfing enthusiast is now Monsignor Creighton at St. Agnes' Catholic Church in San Diego.

In the latter part of the '60's Ralph Mick, Yucca Valley real estate developer and long-time champion of the club, got some friends together and bought it. The principals, besides Mick, were George Gauck and Boyd Glazier. Other members of the management team were Warren Larson, club manager; Jack Rathjen; and "Doc" Sears. The name was changed to Blue Skies Country Club.

More and more people from all over Southern California were enjoying' the benefits of the club. In addition to the regular and continuous membership activities of the Men's and Womens' Golf Clubs, there were the Annual Blue Skies Invitational Tournaments, the Hollywood Hackers' Charity Tournaments, "Midge" and Luz Potter's Invitationals, the McDonald-Douglas Invitationals and, of course, the Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge. (EDITOR'S NOTE: The Hollywood Hackers are a group of television actors and production crew members who contribute all tournament proceeds to various charities. Members hailed from comedy series including "Beverly Hillbillies," "Petticoat Junction," "Green Acres," "Chico and the Man," "Andy Griffith Show," "Gomer Pyle" and "F Troop" and the "The Ben Hunter Show." "Midge" Potter is fondly remembered as "Johnny," in the Phillip Morris commercials.)

Then there was the famous St. Patrick's Day Grudge Match between Mick and fellow real estate developer, Bob Roberts. Local fans followed the pair around the course enjoying both the golfing technique and the running commentary. The match ended, unbelievably, in a tie, and, predictably, with a lot of laughs.

On the social side, there are the Annual Yucca Valley Hearts Balls; other dances; luaus, barbecues and outdoor steak cook-outs in the summer. The Pelican Club and many of the service clubs held their meetings and get-togethers there. For the younger set there were Fishing Derbies and Junior Golf Programs.

The National Arthritis Foundation and the San Bernardino Regional Parks Department have both held prestigious luncheon meetings at the club. The Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital Guild held some of its officer installation dinners there.

When a move out of the desert area necessitate a break-up of the Blue Skies original partnership, the club was sold to Tony Escalera and Rudy Bukich. Jes LeVan took over the club for the two partners.

In 1981, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Root became the new and current owners. Root has had a considerable amount of improvements put in on the greens and fairway and in the ground maintenance program.

The current officers of the Blue Skies Mens' Golf Club are Ed Conlon, president; Ray Hoorebeke, vice president; Buzz Brown, treasurer; and Norm Salveson, secretary.

The Womens' Golf Club officers are Ina Perkins, president; June Czach, vice president; Winnie Bagley, treasurer; Ann Hack, secretary; and Susie Livingston, corresponding secretary. ■

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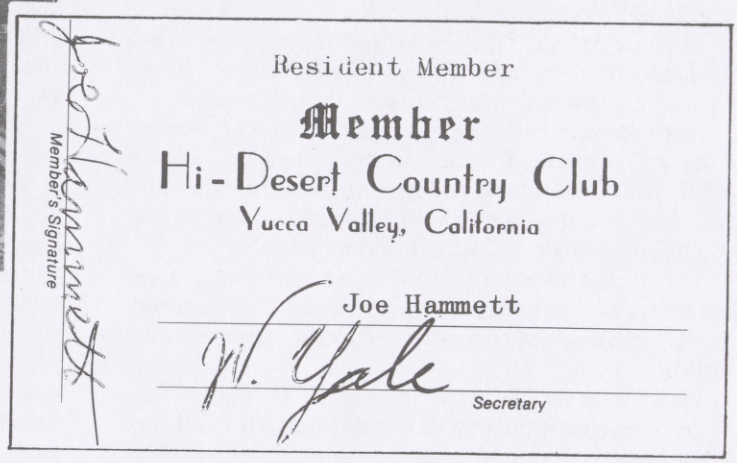
In 1959 there was a very small building on Onaga and a cross street which was used for the first Catholic Church. When Father Creighton saw that the street was named Diablo Trail he was mightily upset, so the name was changed to Church St. Diablo means "devil."

LOOKING east toward 29 Palms, the golf course, now developing. The year is 1967.

MEMBERSHIP CARD for a charter member. There were several memberships available, resident, out of town and social.



Bo, The Happy Clown

One of the best, most consistent "Good Will Ambassador" to ever represent Yucca Valley was Martin Bolha, better known to thousands of parade-loving Southern Californians as "Bo, the Happy Clown."

He and his two sons, Tom and Jeff, dressed in various styles of clown regalia, rode and ran away from their specially-made scooter-float and brought broad grins and much laughter to all the crowds lining each parade route. They also generated happy shouts as they threw handfulls of candy to all the children they saw.

While Martin Bolha still lives and works in Yucca Valley, "Bo" and his battered old top hat are retired. But for fifteen fun-filled years, spanning the 60's and 70's, he and his sons voluntarily engaged in a specially dedicated labor of love. They entertained the spectators gathered to watch the Yucca Valley Grubstakes Days Parades, the Joshua Tree Turtle Races Parades, the Landers/Homestead Valley Fun Festival Parades, the Twentynine Palms Pioneer Days Parades, Old Miners' Days Parades in Big Bear, Palm Springs' Sheriffs' Rodeo Parades, Indio Date Festival Parades, San Bernardino National Orange Show Parades, Hesperia Days Parades, Yucaipa Valley Days Parades, and the Banning Stagecoach Days Parades.

The trio of crazy cut-ups have also appeared in the San Fernando Jaycees' Fiesta Parades, the Lynwood Candy Cane Lane Parades, the Woodland Hills' 4th of July Parades and still more parades in Palm Desert, Fontana, Blythe, Kernville, Bakersfield, Turlock, El Sereno and Huntington Park.

Most of these communities were treated to return engagements by "Bo and Co." each year. In 1967, at Woodland Hills' 4th of July "Freedom Season" Parade, "Bo" was joined by some other Hi-Desert Participants — Equestrians Brian Pomainville and Jonna Sue and Peggy Kee.

"Bo" made many appearances in the world-famous Santa Claus Lane Parades down Hollywood Boulevard. For his faithfulness and mirthful shenanigans he was appointed a member of the Santa Claus Council of Advisors.

Through the years "Bo" and the boys were awarded 75 beautiful trophies which they immediately gave away to some nearby, appreciative child.

"Bo" also holds a membership in the North American Association of Ventriloquists and has been one of the most popular entertainers locally

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Jeff, Tom and Martin Bolha. For years this trio delighted parade and festival audiences. Martin Bolha as "Bo the Happy" is especially remembered in Yucca Valley.

in the Elks Club Annual Kids' Party, the Yucca Valley Elementary School's PTA Halloween Festival and the Elks Club Party at Angel View Crippled Children's Hospital, in Desert Hot Springs.

From time to time Bolha was joined by Ben McWaters in the clown act of "Benny and Bo." In those parades the gags and laughs were even wilder. The pair also enlivened the pre-tournament ballyhoo activities of earlier-day Pioneer Pass Golf Challenges and "posed" for light-hearted publicity pictures with a highly amused Miss Pioneer Pass, Debbie Mitchell.

Martin Bolha has two gaily covered scrapbooks filled to the brim with parade pictures from all over, snapshots of Tom and Jeff getting ready to perform and in full costume, "Benny and Bo" in their comic routines, certificates of award and appreciation, letters of thanks and countless poignant memories. But, the fondest memories of all are those of the miles and years of spectators he cheered. Thank you, "Bo," for a long laugh and a lengthy job well done! ■

Willie Boy and the Yucca Valley Rangers

Fifty-seven years later Morgan Reche, grandson of the heroic deputy, John "Corky" Kee, Phil Geeson and Mick Dickson, along with their wives set out to re-locate the Willie Boy gravesite. They drove their jeeps as far as they could and hiked up the rest of the way to Ruby Mountain. Morgan had been there before, as a boy. He grew up with the legend of Willie Boy's endurance and his grandfather's persistence. His father, Walter Reche, had been an 8-month old boy at the time of the famous manhunt.

They located and marked the gravesite. The Yucca Valley Search and Rescue Unit, also known as the Yucca Valley Rangers, heard of the re-discovery and decided to honor the former posse members by dedicating the site "to all regular and volunteer law officers past, present and future." It was not intended to glorify the fugitive murderer.

Bob Nordyke, of the Rangers, began making arrangements for the preparation of the site and the dedication ceremony.

In April, 1966, the Rangers drove up a rough "jeep-tracked" in from the end of the New Dixie Mine Road by Jim Ishmael and Corky Kee. They installed a chain link fence, donated by Art Miller, around the grave. The right spot for the dedication plaque was chosen and, down and away from the grave, behind a huge boulder, a picnic table was set up for future visitors.

Then, on Sunday, October 9, 1966, almost 57 years to the day, the Willie Boy Monument Dedication Ceremony took place. The Yucca Valley Rangers and their distinguished guests had driven in by jeep and four-wheel drive vehicles. The Morongo Basin Mounted Sheriff's Posse had retraced the earlier posse's route from Old Woman Springs Road where they left their horse trailers.

Nordyke introduced all of the San Bernardino and Riverside County officials and other special guests.

Present to pay homage to the bravery and perserverance of the early-day posse were descendants of those determined men. They were Morgan F. Reche and Mrs. Donna R. Clifford, grandson and granddaughter of Charlie Reche; Mrs. Walter M. "Kit" Reche, who was married to Charlie's son; David L. and Susan L. Clifford, Charlie's great-grandchildren; and Jane Penn, daughter of Willie Pablo. Mrs. Penn is director of the Malki Museum at the Morongo Indian Reservation at Banning. Except for Morgan, it was the first time any of them had been to the site.

PICTURED here at the Willie Boy Gravesite are left to right: Morgan Reche with his hands on his wife's shoulder, Kit Reche, Donna Clifford and T.J. Clifford with their children in front. Morgan Reche and Donna Clifford are the Grandchildren of Charlie Reche. Kit Reche was Charlie Reche's daughter-in-law.

Still another intensely interested and important personage present was Harry Lawton, author of the book, "Willie Boy."

Representing the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and Sheriff Frank Bland were Undersheriff Kendall J. Stone; Inspector Floyd E. Tidwell; Capt. Harry Hoekstra, of the Victorville substation; Lt. Joseph Karr, of the Twentynine Palms substation; Sgt. Louis Richenberger, Det. Roger Melanson and Dep. Ted Dykes, of the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, which has opened on March 1, of that year.

Representing the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was Undersheriff Robert E. Presley, now a State Senator.

Capt. Jim Couzens, then president of the Yucca Valley Rangers, made the dedication presentation and the plaque was put in place.

Among the Yucca Valley Rangers present were Ray Atherton, Charles Haynie, Val Jones, Al Wente, Dr. R. Sterling Butler, Ernie Sall, Art Miller, Jim Ishmael, Jack Volcic and Corky Kee.

In all there were 95 members of the Sheriff's Department, the Yucca Valley Rangers, the Morongo Basin Mounted Sheriff's Posse, the Twentynine Palms Sheriff's Reserves and three members of the Apple Valley Rangers.

The mounted posse, led by Capt. Donald B. McDowell and Det. Roger Melanson, included Rudy Meier, George Hostler, Russ Rassmussen, Ray Milsted, Yogi Cline, Hap Harlow, Fred Johnson, John Hurlburt, Red Davidson, Darrell Pitts, Rex Combs, Jack Phillips and Howard Vore.

As the mounted posse retraced the last 12½ miles of the back-breaking trail laid down by the cunning Piute Indian, its weary members reflected on those earlier hardships.

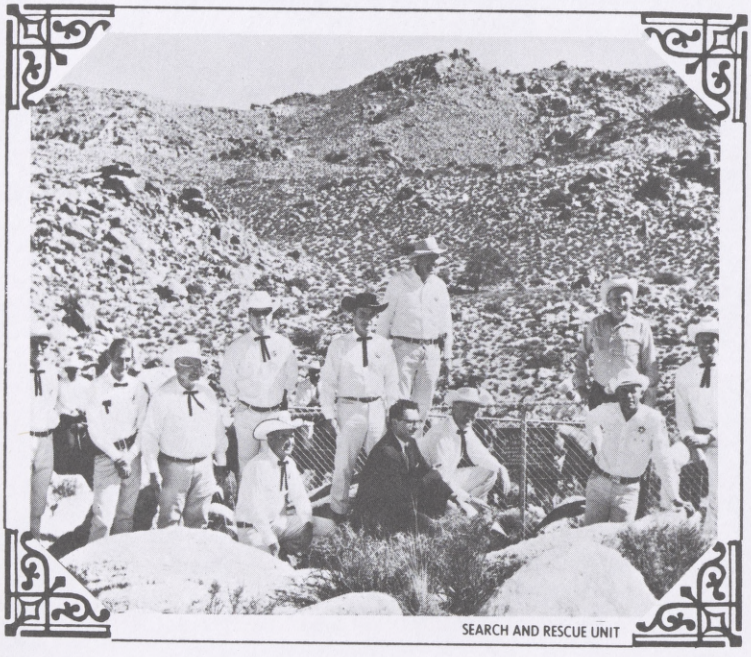
Said McDowell, "Willie Boy was trying desperately to elude his followers and chose the roughest, most precipitous trail. Now that we have ridden over it and back again, my hat is off to him, in this respect only—and very definitely to that posse."

The Rangers were presented copies of a special limited edition booklet pertaining to the event. Its forward was written by Lawton. The text was the official report of the manhunt by Sheriff Frank Wilson to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

The report, dated November 2, 1909, concluded, "I cannot too earnestly praise the bravery and persistency with which our men from Banning followed the trail for over two weeks through hardships and danger that can only be realized by those who were in the hills, or know the hardihood required to stand for over two weeks without shelter the hot days, cold nights and almost sleepless pursuit of a desperate and well-armed murderer in a mountain country well-known to him. He was so vigorously pursued that he was finally worn out, and used his last cartridge to end his own life. The posse are entitled to all the credit for having driven the desperado to his death . . . The course taken seemed to me to be the only one consistent with my duty to follow to his arrest or death one of the most desperate and cold-blooded murderers ever known in our country."

At the monument ceremonies Lawton, who eloquently told those assembled of the tragedy of Willie Boy and his crimes and of the spirit of the lawmen and their heroic deeds, summed up the spirit of dedication. "Because so many of the men who rode under Sheriffs John Ralphs and Frank Wilson were volunteers, it seems to me particularly appropriate that this site of the West's last great manhunt should be marked today by another volunteer group that renders non-salaried services as commissioned sheriff's deputies — the Yucca Valley Rangers."■

THE DEVELOPMENT of the Willie Boy Monument included a broad spectrum of private citizens, law enforcement and politicians. Below left are the Yucca Valley Rangers. They are, left to right: Fred Johnson, Charlie Haney, Val Jones, Alan Writz, Ernie Sall, Art Miller. Kneeling: Jack Volcic, Willie Boy author Harry Lawton, Bob Nordyke and Sterling Butler. Below right: Floyd Tidwell, our current sheriff, Harry Lawton, Bob Presley, Kendall Stone and Harry Hoekstra.



SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT

FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE

One of the earlier fire runs the new Volunteer Fire Department made came when a call went out, "House on fire!" All the volunteers immediately stopped whatever work they were doing (even pouring cement) and, with their car headlights on, reported to the fire station posthaste. Jules Boldizsar picked up Volunteer Bill Lace at his home. It should be remembered that the whole town was located in what is now called "the west end.

The fire truck set out, all eyes sharply scanning the horizon for flames and smoke. They also listened for cries for help. They could see or hear nothing. The truck and other vehicles began going up and down the residential streets. Finally, Lace asked who had reported the fire. It seems that Buck Buxton — a most tactiturn New Englander and newcomer to Yucca Valley — had called and reported the fire, gave his name and hung up. When Jules said the name was Buxton, Lace said, "Why, he lives across the street from me!"

The firefighters swung over to the Buxton home and put out the fire in quick order. In all fairness to the volunteers — no flames, not a whiff of smoke, could be seen from the outside, on all four sides. The fire was all interior. Fortunately, the damage was not too extensive.

When the excitement was over and the volunteers were leaving the scene, Buxton emerged on the front porch, pulled out his tobacco and asked, "Does anyone have a match?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Pack Rat (now Ace Hardware) sold fresh vegatables and fuit in the late '50's. He ran local comedy ads in the Desert Star which everyone in town looked forward to reading. Somewhere in each ad was his "signature" — telling of his location which was always "across from Callahan's . . . Boat Landing, Distillery, Sardine Factory, Beanery, Television Show Room (Pay as you drink) or Bait, Tackle and Fishing Licenses." It was fun to shop there, too. In addition to the running gags and general visiting of the townspeople, there was a variety of delicious fruits at delectable prices such as: seedless grapes, 28¢ a lb.; nectarines, peaches and plums, 18¢ a lb.; bananas, 17¢ a lb.; tomatoes, 15¢ a lb.; lemons, 35¢ a doz.; summer squash, 9¢ a lb.; and cantaloupes and honey dew melons, 7 for $1. (Sigh. Life was happier then.)

Hal Bahr came out to Yucca Valley in April, 1958, to get away from the Los Angeles smog. He proved what great insight he had by purchasing the property next to Lonnie Wightman's Chevron Station. He intended to build a shopping center there. However, by March 1, 1960, he and his wife, Dottie, bought Callahan's Restaurant. Francis and Lily Callahan had bought the establishment from Tommy Bouchey in the mid-50's. In 1965 Hal sold the restaurant to Lee Karhonan, of Indio. He kept it four months and sold it to Lou Kublic. Later it was sold to Bob and Ruth Moody, and still later it was sold to Carl and Carroll Tranum. That first bit of property that Hal bought? Oh, yes, it is now the Desert Hills Plaza Shopping Center and the home of the Safeway Super Store . . . and Hal was right in his judgment!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Francis Callahan and Alton Young started the first taxi service in August, 1959. Now, whose restaurant do you suppose they recommended to the passengers?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Francis was canny, at that. Because in one month, in September, the brand new Glen Restaurant, owned by Scotty and Margot Gillanders, opened for business. Their Crest Room was the largest and nicest public dining-dancing-bar facility in the whole area.

In 1959 Jim Stoops opened up the Hi-Desert territory and began the United Parcel Service. He soon became famous for his fearless striking out in uncharted lands to deliver his packages and parcels. Some said that Jim went where Roadrunners feared to race. At any rate, he set a great example and provided his company with a fine, shining image. He is retired, now, but still living here. Jim Smith is now in charge of the increasing UPS business throughout the Hi-Desert.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Anna and Luigi Castellucci were very good friends of Actor Leo Carrillo. In 1949 they had Bill Pace remodel the fireplace in the house at the back of the lot just west of the building complex now housing The Fish And Brew Restaurant. They opened and served melt-in-your-mouth Italian food. It was always popular but especially in the cold wintertime when the townspeople would drop in for a meal and a long visit around the fire. Nobody was in that much of a hurry then.

History of Giant Rock

The following is a copy of "A Brief History of Giant Rock Covering the Last 90 Years, 1887-1977," which was written and published by the late George W. Van Tassel, owner and operator of the Giant Rock Airport, originator and host of the Giant Rock Space Conventions and creator and builder of the Integratron.

The copy was loaned to this publisher by Arthur De La O, of Joshua Tree. De La O filed on his five-acre claim in 1955, and became interested in George Van Tassel and the activities at Giant Rock from his very first trip to the Hi-Desert. He also became a good friend of the late Billy Royal who is mentioned in Van Tassel's history. Royal, who went to school, grew up and lived all of his adult life in Yucca Valley, was surprised to find he was included in the history, said De La O. The full text follows:

"When I came out here in 1947, I became a close friend of Charlie Reche. Later, I bought Charlie's property, which was known as Reche's Wells.

"Charlie Reche had been here since 1887, at which time the people living in the area were all Indians. Most of the information I gathered concerning the history of Giant Rock was from both the Indians and Charlie Reche. So I figure this information is right from the horse's mouth, so to speak, because they were the ones who were here before it became what it is now.

"According to the Indians, this was an Indian Holy Ground, where the North and South Tribes met annually. The Chiefs held their seances and meetings close by the Big Rock, which they called the 'Great Stone," because to them it was the largest single object in the area. Today, it is still known as the largest single boulder in the world.

"The Indians assembled for their meetings here for up to three days at a time. During their meetings, none of the tribesmen were allowed close by as the meetings, per se, were actually the V.I.P.'s in the tribe. The rest of the people in the tribe had to camp about a mile or so away so as not to be near the actual meeting place.

"I had the honor of being able to speak to the son of an Indian Chief. This man was ten years old when his father put a mark on the Giant Rock, on the North side. The Indians called this mark 'The Sign of the Scorpion.' To the Indian's understanding, this means a good place. Also, wherever an Indian Chief put a sign, no other Indian was allowed to put other signs. This being the reason for only the one sign on the Big Rock. Whenever one finds an area where there are numerous Indian Hieroglyphics on the rocks, this is an area where Indian children have been practicing the art.

'Charlie Reche, having homesteaded here in 1887, was allowed the privilege of meeting with the Indians many times. Reche's homestead included the area where the Integratron now stands, as well as several acres besides.

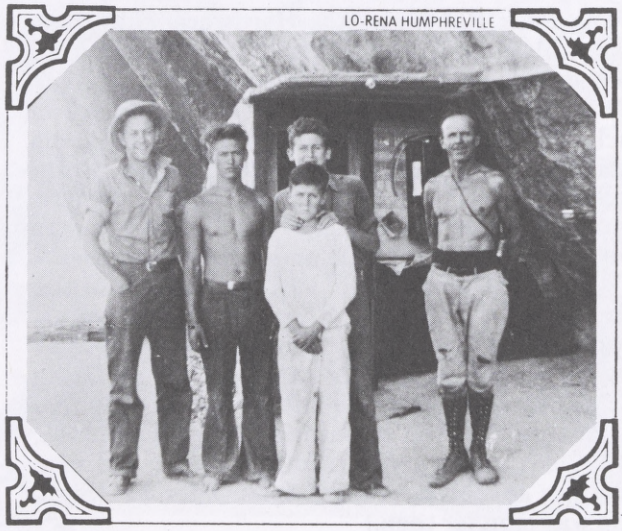
"In 1930, while I was still in Santa Monica, a very interesting person arrived at my uncle's garage. This fellow had taken up prospecting because he had been in a fishing fleet and also in the Merchant Marine, and as a result, had acquired too much moisture on his lungs. Therefore, under doctor's orders, he had discontinued these activities where he had to be in fog and moisture all the time. He had a four cylinder Essex car which had a rod knocking in the engine and he had no money.

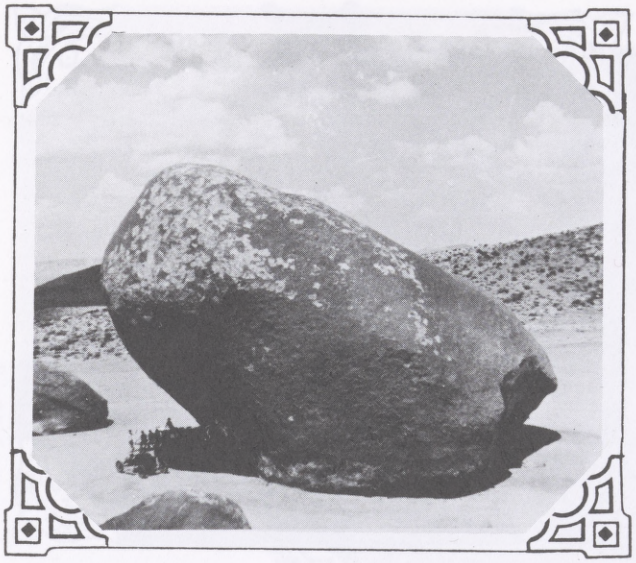
"My uncle, Glenn Paine, had his garage on 2nd Street, just off of Broadway in Santa Monica, across from the Carmel Hotel. He engaged mostly in the selling of overnight parking for the Hotel inside his garage. He also did repair work and was a Buick specialist.

"When I came to California from Ohio, in 1930, to see my uncle, he needed someone to help him. So I stayed with him and that's how I happened to be there.

"This man I spoke of, happened to be Frank Critzer. When he came into my uncle's garage, he was looking for someone to correct that rod knock in his Essex, who would do it without charge.

AT RIGHT, Walter Critzer who build his home under Giant Rock. He needlessly died there in August of 1942.





THE SIZE of Giant Rock, given dimensions, doesn't sound awe inspiring. However given a photogaph like the one above, with a large group of people to scale the size, it becomes "one big rock."

"Being interested in mining and having a period of lull during the depression, we just happened to have a little time on our hands when this fellow drove in with his Essex. So, that same day we took him to lunch with us. We discovered he was a very intelligent person and that he did know quite a lot about prospecting. Thus in the course of getting acquainted we became instant buddies, so to speak. My uncle allowed him to sleep in the garage and we reapired his Essex.

"When Frank Critzer was ready to leave, we gave him $30, which was a lot of money in those days. We also stocked his car full of canned goods and we headed him out. He told us that wherever he would settle down then he'd write to us and also that we would be included in any mining claims he should happen to declare.

"A year went by before we finally heard from him. We had practically given up on him when we received a letter in which he had drawn a map showing how to get to Giant Rock. The following weekend my uncle and I went to Giant Rock to see him.

"Frank had already started to dig under the Big Rock to make a place to live. Banning was the closest town in which one could purchase supplies for building so Frank was getting by with what was there. Too, he had only squatter's rights and a mining claim on Giant Rock. He didn't own the property, for it was government land. By digging under the Rock he could have a place to live without having to purchase materials to amount to anything.

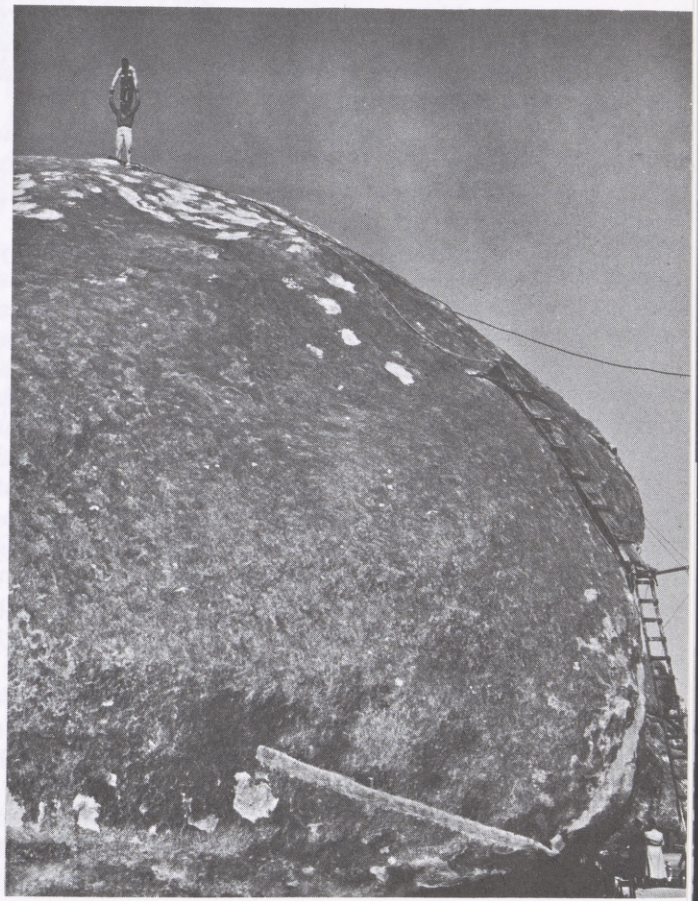
"Frank had shrewdness and comprehension, so he reasoned that if he dug a room under the North side of the Giant Rock, that the boulder would take all summer getting warm and hold the warmth beneath it during the winter. By the same reasoning the Rock would get cold during the winter and keep the room temperature cool during the summer. Thus, there would be little need for heating or cooling. This would amount to six month's delayed thermal reaction.

"This had proved to be good engineering on Frank's part because the maximum temperature under the Rock is 80 F. without any refrigeration in the summer time, and a minimum of 55 F. in the winter time with no heating. The outside temperature will vary from approximately 25 F. to 115 F.

"The Giant Rock covers 5,800 square feet of ground and is seven stories high. The rooms dug out beneath it amount to approximately 400 square feet, so one can readily see that this is a very small fraction of the total area of the bottom side.

"Frank was falsely accused of stealing dynamite, failing to register for the draft, and several other things, in 1942, while the U.S. was at war with Germany. Having a German name, it was assumed by many people that he had to be a German spy in order to live in such a desolate place as Giant Rock.

AGAIN! The scale is immediately obvious. The dark area in the lower right corner is the area where Critzer excavated his home. It was a 900 square foot apartment, with temperatures ranging from a low of 55 degrees to a high of 80 degrees without air conditioning. David Harmon Barney Copley Virginia Cooke



"The only radio Frank Critzer had was one that Charlie Corell (of the 'Amos and Andy' radio comedy team) had given him. I spoke to Charlie later about this as he made frequent trips to Giant Rock. The radio was a little three-dial, A & B dry battery, Atwater Kent, with the tubes exposed and no case around it. It wasn't any good for transmitting messages to Germany, although it was a superhetrodyne receiver (the first efficient receiver to be produced up to that time).

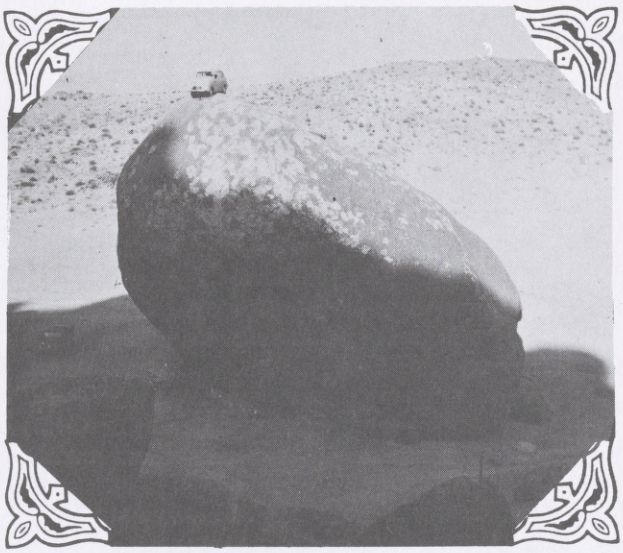
"The stories had generated from some people's erroneous thinking. Frank did have a German name. He had served in the German Navy as a mess boy on a German submarine in World War I. But he had come to our country, worked in our Merchant Marine, and was a naturalized citizen. Besides, he had no further affiliation with Germany whatsoever. But because he did have a big radio antenna on top of the mountain, some people assumed he was using his radio for spying purposes and without first checking with the F.B.I. these people started the rumor that Frank surely must be a spy. Consequently, in August of 1942 three deputies came to Giant Rock, supposedly to take Frank in for questioning.

"I spent many weekends visiting with Frank at Giant Rock. Frank had a big kitchen table, and a big wood-burning cook stove, on which he prepared, cooked and served German pancakes for anyone who happened to stop in. He usually had a case or two of dynamite and a partially opened case under the big kitchen table. We would put our feet on them when we were with him. He also had some caps, as he was doing some prospecting and dynamiting, and he knew how to use these things.

"When the three Deputies came to take Frank in the first thing he noticed was that they were from Riverside County. Giant Rock being in San Bernardino County and Frank being a man of principle, he knew they had no authority in this county and he told them so.

"According to Bill Royal, who had brought the Deputies out here—as they didn't even know where Giant Rock was, Frank after a lot of arguing, said that if they were going to take him in anyway, that he needed to get his coat. When he went into his living quarters beneath Giant Rock to get his coat he pulled the 2 x 4 bar, which he had across the door on the inside to hold it in place, and thus barricaded the door. The Deputies immediately assumed Frank was defying them so they lobbed a tear gas grenade in through the North side window. The unfortunate part of this whole incident was that the grenade landed underneath that table, thus setting off the caps and dynamite. The explosion killed Frank Critzer, blew the windows out, and injured the Deputies.

"Newspapers ran the story that he was a German spy. I had personally talked with the F.B.I., they knew the newspaper stories were not true.



Lorrain Goodhall Koleff

IN the late forties, Life Magazine ran a photo of Giant Rock with an automobile perched atop. Here is a similar photo, just for scale.

"Frank had written a manuscript called the 'Glass Age' which he'd given to a friend to type. In 1936 he had already in print all of the plastics we use today, and some of which we do not have yet. He was an advanced thinker—in his own right with a brilliant mind.

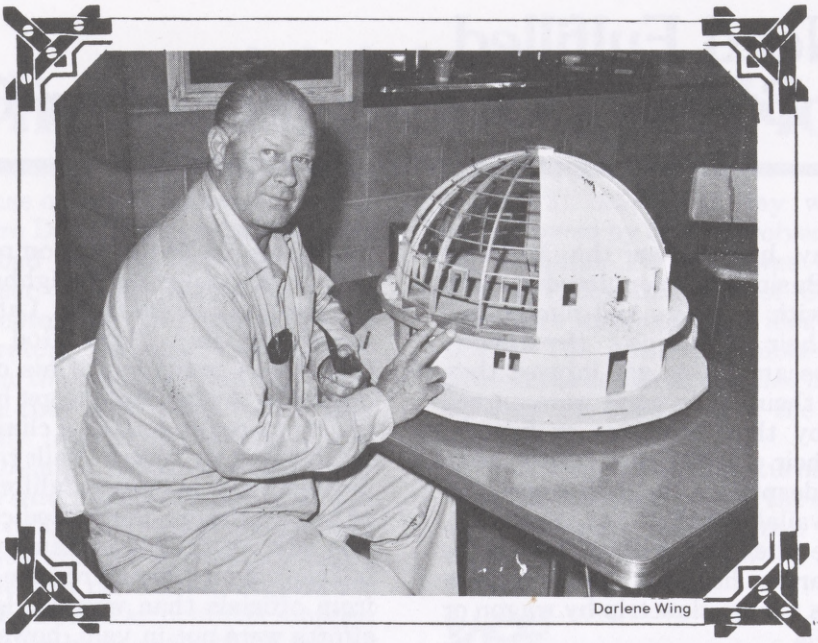
"When I finally had the time from work to come to Giant Rock, after reading about Frank's death in the newspapers, there was nothing left but the hole under the Rock. All of Frank's belongings had been hauled away, including the 4-cylinder Essex. The place was literally stripped. I was working for Douglas Aircraft at the time and about a month had passed before I could come to Giant Rock.

"On numerous occasions, after the death of Frank I came with my wife and family to spend our vacations here camping out—because we all loved this place.

"When the war ended, in 1945, I made application to the Bureau of Land Management—to acquire this property, and wanted to make an airport here. Frank had already cleared an area and many airplanes had landed. However, it wasn't on the airmaps. Being of hard decomposed granite it is a perfect natural runway. But it was not until 1947 when the paperwork which was involved was finally completed and we were able to move to Giant Rock.

"It was in 1953 when we began the weekly meditation meetings in the room under Giant Rock which led to the UFO contacts. This resulted in the information which led to the principles of rejuvenation and to the creation of the Integratron.

"I operated the Airport from 1947 until December, 1975, at which time I sold it to Phyllis and John Brady, who in turn turned it over to Jose Rodriguez and his family in 1977.



GEORGE VAN TASSEL 1910-1970. Author, Inventor and controversial U.F.O. advocate. Some agreed, some disagreed with his Philosophy. None found him boring.

"Giant rock has been known world-wide for a long time for its unusual UFO activities and for the many unmatched Annual Space Conventions which have been held here."

After Van Tassel's death, the government ordered that the hole under Giant Rock be completely filled up and sealed. The small restaurant that Van Tassel had built at the Airport was also ordered to be taken down. But the government cannot erase the memory of the man or the discussions held at Giant Rock. Van Tassel, although he dealt with abstract (and what some believed to be unreal) subjects, was an uncomplicated man who believed and kept the faith.

Van Tassel, who was born in Jefferson, Ohio, on March 12, 1910, sponsored and presided over seventeen Spacecraft Conventions held at Giant Rock. The first one was held on April 4, 1954, and the last on October 10, 1970. Events of this kind seem bound to attract a certain number of "kooks." But at each of his conventions Van Tassel had a number of fascinating and knowledgeable guest speakers and the audience was made up, predominantly, of people vitually interested in the subject of UFOs.

Van Tassel died unexpectedly of a heart attack on February 9, 1978. At memorial services held for him the following March 12, at The Institute of Mentalphysics, Yucca Valley, two of the songs he had composed, "Say I'm Not Dreaming," and "There I Am," were included. Printed on the program was a statement typical of Van Tassel's philosophy and faith:

"And the Lord said Go

"And I said Who Me?
And he said yes, You,
And I said
But I'm not ready yet
And there is company coming
And I can't leave the kids
And you know there's no one to take my place
And he said you're stalling

"Again the Lord said Go
And I said But I don't want to
And he said I didn't ask if you wanted to
And I said
Listen I'm not the kind of person
to get involved in controversy
besides my family won't like it
And what will my neighbors think?
And he said Baloney
"And yet a third time the Lord said Go
And I said do I have to?
And he said do you love me?
And I said
Look, I'm scared
People are going to hate me
and cut me up in little pieces,
I Can't take it all by myself,
And he said where do you think I'll be?

"And the Lord said go
And I sighed
Here I am, send me.

A Big Need Fulfilled . . . .
. . . . By An Even Bigger Labor Of Love

Way back when the Morongo Basin was populated mostly with ranchers and miners and their families, if anyone became ill or got injured they usually took to their beds and were nursed and attended to by their relatives or friends. Many regained their health, but there were always other who, despite all the loving care and best medicine available, did not make it. Whenever possible the sick and injured were taken to the nearest hospital, in San Bernardino—but it was a long, slow trip by wagon or early-day automobile.

In the 1930's two of those trips involved Ruth Duarte, who had a homestead high up in Pipes Canyon, and Carl and Nellie Yonse, her friends and tenants. She was putting in a garden one summer when she injured her leg. When it did not heal properly, Carl took her on the long trip to San Bernardino. Later, in the winter when the snow was unusually deep and cold, Carl's son, Russ, had a bad attack of appendicitis. Carl enlisted the help of John Olson, who lived down-canyon from Ruth's homestead. They tried driving the car but the snow was too deep. In a harrowing, time-consuming trip, the adults tried shoveling and driving their way down to John's house, where a man with a larger, more powerful car awaited. The snow was much too deep. Ruth suggested that Carl and John pull Russ and her the rest of the way in the two large scoop shovels. They did just that. Then came that trip to San Bernardino. Russ was a lucky boy. He made it.

At the end of World War II John Olson, a true friend to everyone who came to his house or the Onyx Mine, befriended a soldier passing through the area. John did not know the soldier was AWOL. But the deserter, thinking he knew his secret, shot him and fled. John was not discovered for a few days but was then taken to San Bernardino as quickly as possible. He was too badly injured and, despite the excellent care, he died in the hospital.

Through the years there were many other close-call experiences. One such happened in the early spring of 1957, when a young Steve Heard injured himself in an accident at home. His mother, Mary, didn't wait for anyone; she got Steve in the car and drove him non-stop to the Ince Memorial Hospital, which had been built in Twentynine Palms.

In May of that same year the Rev. Lawrence Piazza had a serious medical emergency. He was taken to Redlands Community Hospital by his "Good Samaritan" neighbors Ed Ware, Clyde Donlee and Joe Karvelis. Later, he thanked his friends, saying, "May God bless them," and launched a campaign of his own. The Reverend urged the townspeople to get behind the Chamber of Commerce in getting a clinic or medical center established in Yucca Valley. He had travelled personally to northern California and the offices of the California State Medical Board. There he was advised that the Chamber, representing the full community, would receive more consideration from officials than would a lone individual. His efforts were not in vain, however, he had broken the ice.

The next serious episode took place when Eddie Schell, a local boy, was involved in an accident. The car had flipped over and he had a broken leg. A call went out to the Twentynine Palms ambulance, owned by the Ince Hospital. Additional calls went out as it became a two-and-a-half hour wait. Dr. William T. Ince explained later that the first duty of his ambulance was to be on call for the people of Twentynine Palms.

In the following Grubstake Days Parade, Ida Van Nest hung a sign on the side of her station wagon. It read, "We need an ambulance!" The Yucca Valley Lions Club took up the cry and funds were ultimately raised for the purchase of a used ambulance, costing $3,500. It was inspected by Bill Riesen.

MRS. IDA VAN NEST'S station wagon advertising the need for a hospital. In earlier years, she advertised the need for an ambulance in the same way.

. . . . Hi Desert Memorial Hospital

The first major use of the ambulance, manned by Yucca Valley Fire Department personnel, was in response to a bad head-on collision on the Victorvile Road near V. Ray Bennett's home. Bennett, the inventor of the famous Bird Machine for respiratory patients, took all the children involved in the accident into his home and kept them until they were called for by their families. A seriously injured grandmother was loaded into the ambulance, which was driven by Woody Wilson. His wife, Joan, followed in her car in case she could be of any help. At Smoketree the wiring malfunctioned and the ambulance lights went out. Joan pulled her car in front and led the way. A California Highway Patrol officer stopped them, found out the problem and then he led the way to the Ince Hospital.

By now it was apparent that a hospital was sorely needed in the west end of the Morongo Basin. But how does a town go about it and who even dreamed such a project could really succeed?

In March, 1958, a community committee was formed to look into the cost of a possible hospital. Bob Barngrover was the chairman. Other committee members were V. Ray Bennett, Rev. David Hansen, Dean Howell and Harold Brown. U.S. Department of Health construction cost figures at that time were $24.00 per square foot. A ten-bed hospital would cost $276,500 to build and equip. That was considered too high. Barngrover suggested the alternative of a clinical facility which would include a doctor's office, emergency room, ward with one or two beds and volunteer nurses.

Yucca Valley organizations represented at the committee meeting held at the Elementary School were the American Legion, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Property Owner's League, Players, Rotary Club, Dirt Diggers' Club, Toastmistress Club, Sojourners, PTA, Sheriff's Reserve, Pioneer Desert Board of Realtors, Dandee Lions, Community Church, Light and Life Chapel, Assembly of God Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dr. Dwight Rawson, of Morongo Valley, represented the medical profession. From people and organizations such as these the High Desert Memorial Hospital Fund evolved.

With interest definitely growing in getting a hospital, Dr. Byron Walls, of Torrance, and Dr. Kenneth B. Kincy, of Twentynine Palms, opened Yucca Valley medical offices in the Martell Bldg.

The first major fund-raising project, that of building a house, was conceived by Bud Stewart and Lou Holland. And here's how the hospital story officially started:

July 3, 1958, is a day which will be long remembered by those involved in fund-raising for the hospital. For that was the date when the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors approved the idea of constructing a house. The entire Chamber of Commerce approved the construction idea at a general meeting on July 10, 1958 . . . and the work soon got underway.

And what a house it turned out to be. Built with the labor and love of the entire town, it was a tourist mecca for months. And even today, residents still refer to it as "The Hospital House."

ABOVE, sign on site of Hospital House. Many parcels were offered. The parcel donated by Art Miller was used. BELOW, Lou Holland, Bud Stewart and Bill Adams clearing the site of Hospital House.

The Hi-Desert property owners proved themselves to be generous as a number of lots were donated to the project. Lots which were donated to the cause through the High Desert Memorial Hospital Fund came from the real estate offices of Hacienda Knolls, Sky Harbor Ranchos and Estates, and Art Miller's Western Hills Estates; and from individual property owners like Mr. and Mrs. D.F. Geil, of Morongo Valley; and Mr. and Mrs. Si Stanley, of Twentynine Palms. The total value realized of this donated property exceeded $12,000 by 1961.

Art Miller's lot was chosen for the Hospital House and "bosses" for each phase of construction work were named. Norm Essig, Harold Brown and Bob Schoenleber planned the construction schedules.

Materials and labor were also donated, with only a bare minimum of building expense involved. "Tish" Tisue and Don Kingston poured the slab for the Hospital House.

On Labor Day Weekend hundreds of workers, virtually every local member of the construction industry and every other skilled worker in the area, showed up, worked around the clock in some cases, and at the close of the holiday, the house was finished.

Dorothy and Ernie Littlepage showed up, too, and cooked pancakes by the hour for the crews working on the house.

No mention of the Hospital House could be made without recalling "Mr. and Mrs. Hospital House" themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Gross earned the undying gratitude of the Morongo Basin with their faithful support of the project (and, later, the hospital itself).

MR. / MRS. HOSPITAL HOUSE. This couple deserves a special place in the hearts of Yucca Valley. They devoted themselves, unselfishly to the realization of the Hospital — Mr. Charlie Gross, Mrs. Mary Gross.

Long after the work on the house was completed, the elderly couple remained on duty. For days, weeks and months they occupied the house during the day, conducting tours through the structure and selling tickets on the project. On Thanksgiving Day they stayed at the house all day by themselves, unbeknown to any of the other townspeople. They had decided not to bother with a holiday dinner. When Roy Roush and other chamber members discovered them at the house in the evening, they bought Thanksgiving dinners with all the trimmings and brought them to the steadfast couple.

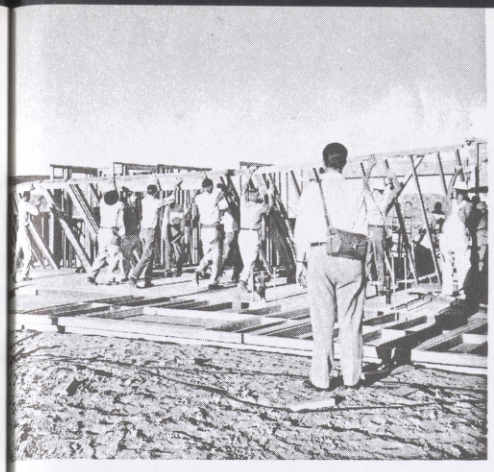
THE GRUBSTAKE DAYS PARADE was an excellent place to drum up support for the much needed Hospital.

The long hours they spent earned them love, respect and the gratitude of the townspeople.

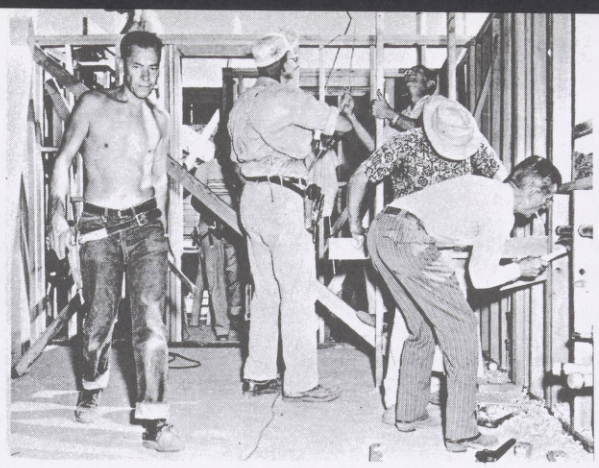
The younger generation did its share, too. A perfect example of this is the project young Butch Miller came up with. Butch, son of Art and Hazel Miller, got out his buggy and "Honey Lou" on October 5, and sold tickets for rides around the Hospital House area. One ticket, one ride.

Meanwhile, by 1959 an organization was founded out of the fund-raisers which was destined to play a major role in the hospital campaign. It was Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, Inc. Its first Board of Directors were Mrs. Elsinore Machris, John C. Marsh, Norm Essig, Jonn Haskell, Mrs. Phyllis Grubaugh, Art Katje, Bill Williams, Honey Fellers, Ethel Chance, Don Moore and Lela Osborn.

One of the important parts of the campaign to sell tickets was conducted by a group of women headed by Joan Wilson and Alice Bennett. Without realizing any of the finer legal points, the group mailed out a mimeographed letter—and the tickets—to property owners, friends and relatives. It wasn't long before Joan Wilson was hurriedly summoned to a specially called meeting of the Inc. members. There she was introduced to a U.S. Postal Inspector who told her of regulations concerning the U.S. Mail and lotteries.

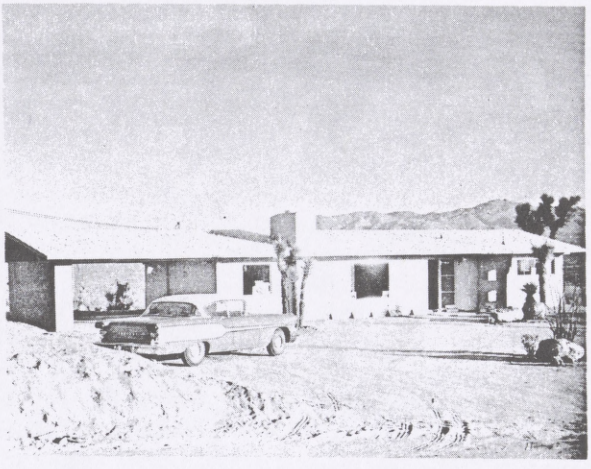


OLUNTEER WORKERS putting up walls f Hospital House.



WIRING being done by Fred Tripp, Virgil Miller and Son, and others.

THE WINNING NUMBER is being picked by Gwennett Swogger.



THE FIRST HOSPITAL BOARD — First row — left to right: Ethel Chance, Honey Fellers, Elsinore Machris and Phyllis Grubaugh — back row: John C. Marsh, Don Moore, Bill Williams, Lela Osborn, Art Katje, Norm Essig and John Haskell.

BOVE, labor and materials for Hospital House roof re donated by Anderson Roofing. ABOVE RIGHT, he finished Hospital House, ready for raffle. BELOW, rt Miller and Tyna English take part in the finishing eremonies.

THE AMBULANCE that was the forerunner to the outstanding hospital effort.

She heard him out—including such topics as penalties, illegal actions, etc.—and then asked if he had enjoyed the trip to Yucca Valley, the fresh air, sunshine, the quiet, etc. He admitted that he had enjoyed his trip.

"Then," she stated, "you're part of the problem because it's people like you who come up from down below and look at all the scenery instead of the road and get into accidents and we don't have a hospital here to take you to for medical attention!"

The inspector proved to be an understanding official. He laughed heartily and admonished Joan and her fellow-workers not to send any more tickets through the mails.

While this part of the campaign was in full swing, Mort and Sam Rosenbaum, of Cabin Homes, spent the time, effort and money to obtain the hundreds of names and addresses of Hi-Desert property owners from the Bureau of Land Management Office and turn the list over to the hospital fund people.

Also, in this same vein, all of the local motel owners made out lists of names and addresses of patrons who had stayed at their motels, looked around the area while visiting and purchased property.

These two separate efforts saved the hospital fund workers days and days of traveling to San Bernardino and looking up the information in the County Assessor's Office.

At that, donations from this part of the drive alone netted more than $8,000.

As it was worked out, with each ticket purchased, the donor received an Associate Membership in the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce. The winner of the fundraising drive could choose between ownership of the Hospital House or $15,000 in cash.

By September 11, 1958, there were already 40,000 Associate Memberships awarded to the donors. There was a huge wooden thermometer in front of Fred Storey's office at the corner of the highway and Pioneertown Road which gave the amount of the donations as they came in and indicated each "temperature rise." There were also miniature mail-boxes on counters all over the Hi-Desert where everyone could drop in money for the hospital fund. The boxes were obtained from Mayo Bradfield, an advertising specialties salesman who lived in Yucca Valley.

The Hospital House drawing took place on December 20, 1959. On hand to help with the drawing was Abe Schiller, "Mr. Las Vegas" and Flamingo Hotel publicist. Gwynett Swogger was selected to reach in and pull out the lucky number. The winner of the Hospital House was Benny Lopez, of Pico-Rivera. A truly lucky man, Mr. Lopez's name was drawn from among the thousands of Chamber of Commerce Associate membership tickets purchased by the visitors to the house. Mr. Lopez, who had a good teaching job "down below" and did not want to move away, chose to accept the money.

By the time all things had wound up the expense sheet showed $40,380 in gross receipts; $7,937.13 for the cost of the house; $7,031.41 for promotional expense; $273.90 for legal expense; $1,907 miscellaneous. Thus the venture netted the hospital fund a total of $23,230.56, and the hospital was on its Way to becoming a reality.

From that time on, money-raising events were the order of the day.

A box social had already been held on October 16, 1958, which really seemed to set the tone and the resolve of the "grass roots" participation.

One of the earlier promotions took place on November 27, 1958, when comedian George Gobel rode a camel through the crowds publicizing the need for a hospital.

On December 12 through 14, 1958, a "Roundup of Stars" was held to help publicize the hospital and the hospital house fund-raising projects. Attending and contributing their talents to the cause were Phil Harris, Desi Arnez, Sr. and Judith Parker.

Within several months after the drawing, the Hospital House was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Edward T. Whiter, of Glendora, who moved into their new home. Bill Tenney, of the Ole Hanson Co. handled the sale and turned over his commission on the $18,500 deal to the hospital fund.

All community efforts went toward the goal. The Sky Drive-In Theatre opened for business with all proceeds on Opening Night going to the fund.

During Grubstake Days in May, 1959, a new Nash Rambler was awarded to the lucky ticket holder. The car was obtained through the auspices of Francis Callahan and his son-in-law, E.G. Price, of San Bernardino.

Pledge cards were mailed to residents and businessmen, with donations continuing to come in from these mailings.

The Yucca Valley Players presented a performance of "My Three Angels" and 50% profit from its run went to the hospital.

Louella Williams, of the Pioneer Desert Realtors, hit the businessmen up and down the main street and returned with $1,227, bringing the total to $31,028.85 at this point.

Members of the Hospital, Inc. board appointed Gladys Stiff to be chairman of the Smorgasbord Dinner held at the Hi-Desert Park and which netted more than $300 for the kitty.

The Glen Restaurant's fabulous weekend Grand Opening boosted the total by $1,010 as "Scotty" and Margo Gillander contributed the entire proceeds from an opening buffet served to hundreds of visitors.

With viewers donating $1 to the hospital, L. Adams Hanson showed films of Russia and European countries at the Yucca Valley

Elementary School. Hanson was in charge of Circarama, in Moscow, during the Trade Exhibit at that time.

A Halloween Festival at Osborn's Market featured a pancake breakfast served by members of the hospital committee. More than 1,000 pancakes were consumed.

With perfect weather and a receptive crowd, Bob Brownell and Bob Bennett auctioned off donated items and raised $356.43. Charlie Haynie had conceived the idea and the auction was held at his second-hand store.

The death of one of the Hi-Desert's most loved women, Margaret Jewett, resulted in a Memorial Fund for a nurses unit. Mrs. Jewett had served as a nurse in the Orient.

The staff of Jerry's Restaurant, in Joshua Tree, donated the time to serve a Chuckwagon Dinner on November 11. A $2 donation got you all you wanted to eat.

IN MORE WAYS than one can recall the Hi Desert Tract Owners Association contributed a great deal to our hospital.

Members of the Yucca Valley Women's Club served a Turkey and Ham Dinner, netting still another $110 to the growing fund.

Proving that even a small amount helps, the Pioneer Desert Board of Realtors turned over $24.60 after its annual picnic at the Yucca Corral Acres. This was just a teaser as this board contributed more through the whole fund-raising campaign.

June LeMert Paxton was Yucca Valley's Poet-Laureate and one of its first resident writers. Her love of the desert and its people was evident when the author donated half of her commissions to the hospital from the sale of her book, "My Life on the Mojave." Mrs. Paxton came to the desert in 1932 for her health. Her poetry and philosophical writing soon became well known and greatly appreciated.

Fred A. Storey, one of the Original subdividers and developers of Yucca Valley, offered the hospital board 20 acres of land at about one-fifth of its retail value.

The Directors, at a special meeting, issued Storey a certified check for $10,000 as the price of the property and, in an all-out effort to raise more funds, informed those attending the general meeting that "there will be a hospital here soon." At that same, August, 1960, meeting some new members of the Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors were named. They were Bonnie Gardiner, Ron Livingston, Fred Storey, Lou Thompson, Scottie Ruben, and Elvira Clift.

At this point an accounting of funds was given and the total was $33,410.37. The check for the hospital site was to come out of this amount.

The Inc. Directors also voted to issue Life Memberships for donations of $100 or more; Active Memberships; and Associate Memberships.

Meanwhile, the money continued to roll in with small and large donations being collected. The Women's Club held another Buffet Dinner and other organizations continued their fund-raising efforts.

Mrs. Machris donated $10,700 for a room in the Hospital Headquarters in the Yucca Valley Plaza.

On October 29, 1960, the facilities of the Copper Room were made available for a Halloween costume party. Chairmanned by Phyllis Grubaugh and Honey Fellers, the party netted $260 for the ever-growing fund.

The VFW Auxiliary pledged to earn the money to supply the furnishings for a semi-private room at the hospital, and made good on their word.

The Lions Club guaranteed a minimum of $1,000 to furnish still another room.

A Box Social was held at Callahan's Restaurant in December, 1960, with all proceeds going to the hospital.

One of the most successful projects was the Hi-Desert Children's Christmas Party at the Community Club in Yucca Valley. Hundreds of youngsters, with their mothers and fathers, came to see Santa and stayed for lunch, gifts and a Christmas program which featured Mr. and Mrs. Art Baker, of radio and television fame. Santa, resplendent in his red suit, arrived via airplane at the Yucca Valley Airport and was escorted by the Junior Equestrians to the Community Club. The young riders stayed at the door and sold mistletoe they had collected themselves. They raised $17 this way and promptly turned the money over to the hospital fund.

Louella Williams and John Haskell were the co-chairmen for the Yule Party.

At a specially-called meeting of Hospital, Inc. on December 28, 1960, its Board of Directors accepted recommendations of Dr. Alfred

Goldman, the City of Hope heart specialist. Dr. Goldman recommended that additional facilities for the proposed 24-bed hospital include a cardiac emergency room and cardiac receiving and treatment rooms.

After much discussion, Directors voted to hire the Hospital Planning and Engineering Company, of Los Angeles, to start preliminary plans for the hospital.

James W. Geddes, vice president of the firm, made many visits to the area checking all phases of the campaign, the site, the area's needs.

The Los Angeles firm specializes in designing, building, procuring and financing of small community hospitals.

Dr. Goldman volunteered to be Chief of Staff at the Proposed Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital and remained active throughout the planning of the structure.

All organizations and so many individuals continued to work for the hospital fund and to contribute as much as they could on a regular basis. Therefore, these fund-raisers were indeed thrilled when it was announced that the hospital site was ready to go out to bids in February, 1961. The Holland Paving Co., with the lowest bid of $2,828, got the contract for the paving of the first increment of the hospital.

It had been recommended that, to speed the hospital's existence, it would be most beneficial to form a tax-supported hospital district. Hospital, Inc. and some of the more concerned citizens were instrumental in bringing about the formation of the district and its follow-up bond election. At this time the representatives of Twentynine Palms were asked if they wanted to be a part of the proposed district. They declined and set about forming their own district.

The Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital District was voted into existence on April 3, 1962, and officially instituted by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on April 16, 1962. The first Board of Directors was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on April 30, 1962. Members of that first board were: Gilbert D. Buck, Lila Mae Final, Owen W. Murphy, John R. Blodgett and Eugene L. Albrecht.

An active and functional Citizens' Advisory Council was formed by the District with representatives from the various communities within the District and reported to the Board all suggestions and ideas garnered from the citizenry.

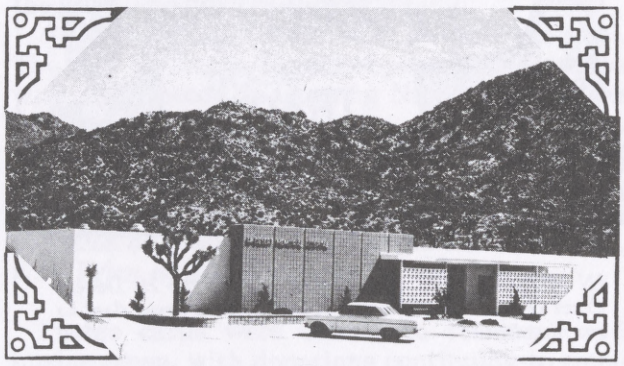
On December 11, 1962, a bond issue of $350,000 was passed to construct and equip a 24-bed General Hospital on a 20-acre site already set aside for that purpose. That building was to be the nucleus of a 100-bed facility and was the exact duplicate of the Wilmington Community Hospital at Los Angeles Harbor. It was especially designed to be added on to in separate sections as the community's needs arose. This has been done through the years with the Wilmington Hospital.

While the local hospital was under construction, a group of Hi-Desert doctors made an additional suggestion. In the wake of many recent and serious automobile accidents the doctors proposed that a 24-hour emergency clinic be constructed immediately. This would not interfere with the 24-bed hospital, they claimed, and that, to save expenses, the Inc. headquarters in the Plaza could be converted to the emergency clinic.

HDMH, Inc.'s Board of Directors voted to explore the cost of equipping such a clinic and to appoint a special committee to find out all the facts.

The committee for the clinic proposal was composed of Resident Deputy Sheriff Roger Melanson, chairman; and Drs. R. Sterling Butler, Sam Hon, Edward Lincoln Smith and Byron Walls; also, Yucca Valley Fire Chief Harry Brissenden and Ethel Chance.

Construction of the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital was completed on April 24, 1964. Equipment was installed and Open House was held on April 25 and 26.



THE HI DESERT Memorial Hospital at completion. It served the Hi Desert well until the building of H.D.M.C. in Joshua Tree. The Yucca Valley facility is now a Moyles Convalescent Hospital.

The total amount of construction contracts, including extras, architectural fees, equipment and incidental expenses amounted to $425,000.00. The Hospital was dedicated on May 17, and opened on May 18, 1964.

The District selected Mr. Sam Loewen as the new Administrator. He assumed his duties on January 1, 1964.

Resident and non-resident (Associate member) doctors, without exception, praised the unusually well-equipped, staffed and administered facility which was a 24-bed General Hospital with maternity facilities. There were two major surgeries, an emergency surgery and examining room, a four-bed recovery room,

delivery and labor room, nursery with three incubators, a well-equipped laboratory and X-ray room. The newest equipment included a 300 MA 150 KVP Westinghouse X-ray machine with Fluoroscopy and a 100 MA 100 KVP Portable X-ray machine. There was also a Telephone Transmitter attachment for the Electrocardiograph machine.

The hospital staff included a Nurse Anesthetist on call 24-hours a day; four local doctors on the active staff, one of which was on 24-hour call to the Emergency Room. The Associate and Consulting staff consisted of two Dentists, one O.B. Gynecologist, three Surgeons, one Urologist, one Orthopedist, one Internalist, two Neurologists, one Anesthesiologist, one Radiologist and one Pathologist.

Elsinore Machris, who up to mid-1963 had already donated personally more than $60,000 to the hospital project, now bought and donated virtually all of the X-ray equipment to the new Hi-Desert hospital; as she had earlier purchased and donated all of the very first X-ray equipment for the then-new Desert Hospital, in Palm Springs.

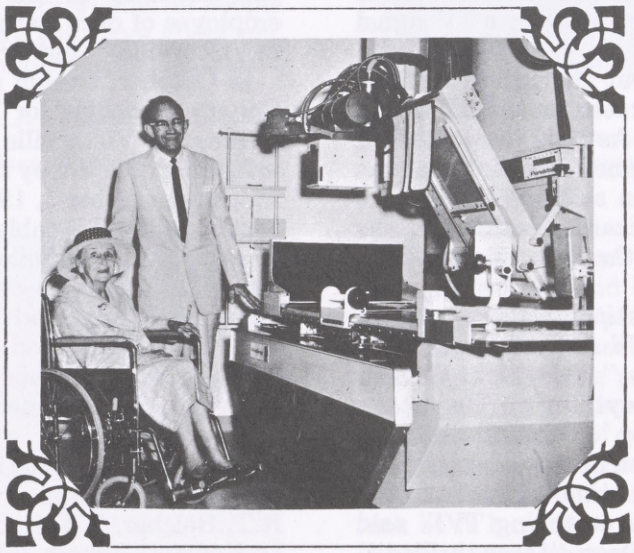
And, so it was accomplished. A dream come true. A hard-fought-for fairy tale becoming reality in their lifetimes. As the people proudly toured the sparkling new medical facility they couldn't help remembering the part each had played in its existence. There were hundreds of them who would always think of the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital as "My Hospital."

Small wonder, then, that all those who had worked so hard, so long, so constantly, should resent the fact, so soon in the hospital's life, there were concentrated plans to put it out of business! At first, no one could believe it. But when it became obvious, the anger and deep resentment followed naturally.

Suddenly, these loyal supporters felt, there was the strong, high-pressure push to merge the Hi; Desert Memorial Hospital District with the Twentynine Palms Hospital District by reorganization. the HDMH District was the larger and the stronger of the two. Its citizens had requested annexation rather than reorganization. It was pointed out that annexation would be possible (financially, physically, taxwise, medically and accreditation-wise) almost immediately . . . because financing of a new hospital is available to the strong district and not to the weak district.

The HDMH tax-payers were also concerned about the fact that re-organization breaks up a strong district but annexation retains it.

As the merging of the two districts moved on, the majority of the HDMH tax-payers came to resent the manner in which the matter was being handled, bureaucratically; the ignoring and nullifying of a legitimate election of the majority of the HDMH district voters; the ignoring of the possibility of Safecare Corp. (a hospital construction and medical administration organization) building and operating a private hospital in the Morongo Basin and the subsequent dissolution of the tax-supported hospital district—despite the expressed desires of the HDMH district tax-payers to look into it; and the ignoring of the wishes of Mrs. Elsinore Machris, as expressed in her last Will: that her medically-affiliated bequest be used to benefit the people of Yucca Valley and the other communities of the original HDMH district. ■



SHOWN AT LEFT is the late Elsinore Machris. International Philanthropist, and regular donor to the Hi Desert Memorial Hospital. Here she is shown presenting a $25,000 X-ray Machine to the Hospital Administrator, Sam C. Loewen.

Photos on pages 91 through 97 are from Joan's Collection.

TV Really Comes to Yucca Valley

By the mid-1950's practically everyone in the big cities had television sets in the living rooms and antennas on the roofs. Out in the country not too many people had TV sets because reception wasn't good, if at all. In Yucca Valley two men, at different times, had come through promising to lay out a TV cable system. They each had collected connection fees and service money from the eager townspeople, but when neither was successful in building or starting a workable system they each had skipped town—without paying the money back.

.Therefore, in the fall of 1956, when Joe Freeman, a local land surveyor, called Joan Wilson and said he knew a man who wanted to talk to her about coming to Yucca Valley to put in a TV cable system, she was more than leary. Joan was the Advertising Manager and a Staff Writer for the Hi-Desert Star, a decidedly active member of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and was known to be a devout fan of television before she moved up to the high desert area. Under the previous circumstances, she decided to ignore Joe's message. By the third telephone call it was the man himself—Neal Groom. He told her he owned and operated a TV cable service titled the Lucerne Valley Engineering Co., Inc. He said his company was headquartered in Victorville and that if he could talk to her for just ten minutes he could prove to her that he could bring a TV signal into Yucca Valley.

She was still skeptical but she agreed to meet him at the water tanks located on the hill above the south end of Fox Trail. As Neal Groom talked and told her what he planned and how he was going to do it, Mrs. Wilson said she thought he must be a modern-day wizard. Hesitantly, she again agreed to meet him the following morning at the water tanks.

He arrived in his station wagon with a generator, an antenna, a TV set and a mattress. "I was all the more leary," said Mrs. Wilson. Groom started hooking everything up. He put the mattress over the TV top to provide enough darkness for the screen, then he turned on the set. "All at once I realized I'm standing there in the middle of nowhere and I'm watching TV!" said the no-longer-leary Mrs. Wilson. "I was thrilled!"

She told everybody and excitement grew as the word spread. Groom made arrangements to lease the land by the water tanks.

The Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce authorized a trip to Victorville for Mrs. Wilson to double-check what kind of service and reception they got. Posing as someone interested in moving into the town, she went in to business offices and drove into residential neighborhoods making her inquiries. She saw for herself that reception was good and the opinions were too. This she reported to the chamber. Groom also had a good Dunn and Brad-street rating.

NEAL GROOM, who brought cable television to Yucca Valley in 1956.

Groom found out about Yucca Valley and its possibilities in the summer of 1956. A friend, Gene Robinson, told him he wanted to build the Yucca Valley system himself but he did not have the financing or the know-how. "He was an employee of ours learning what he could from us in Victorville," said Groom.

In October, Groom received a San Bernardino County franchise for the area and sold out his interest in Victorville to get the capital to put into the Yucca Valley system.

"On November 1, 1956, we began in earnest to construct the TV cable system in Yucca Valley," he said. "The first mile of line was from the water tanks to our office on the southwest corner of Bannock Trail and the Twentynine Palms Highway. We leased that office from Blanche Barrett. That was where we first showed TV and signed up the customers."

The first people who signed up were Paul Albert, Al Peters, Joe Freeman, Arthur L. David, Art Katje, George Evanoff, Charles L. Gross, K.T. Belcher, E.J. Hottenroth, W.C. King, Clyde L. Kenney, Robert Johnson, Gale Taylor, Eddie Spanier, Blanche Barrett, Thomas Humphreville, Odis Ray, Viola Humphreville, Joan Wilson, Francis Callahan, R.A. Potter, William Royal, James Estus, Leo Higgins, Jule Boldizsar, Stocky Stockbridge and Bob Durant. "Not in the

first group but sometime soon after was Mr. Valentine, since he was the first subscriber to be connected to the cable," Groom said.

"From our original head-end on the south end of Bannock Trail, there were only three channels available, 2-4-5," Groom said.

Bill Runyon, the county health inspector, said he got better reception at his property in Morongo Valley. Groom came out to take a look and arrangements were made.

"After moving the head-end to Morongo Valley at Bill Runyon's place, we were able to add channels 7, 9 and 11. At that time we also added FM radio to the cable.

"We first wired Yucca Valley, then east through Joshua Tree before wiring Morongo Valley," he continued. "By New Year's Day of 1957, we had connected up one hundred customers to view the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl game for the first time on TV in Yucca Valley. Four years later, on New Year's Day, we had just barely connected one thousand subscribers to the cable from Morongo Valley to Joshua Tree . . .Our last extension of the system was to Sunfair, where the TV signals were no longer able to be reamplified because of their degradation through the system that far . . . When I sold out in June of 1964 (he was the sole owner), just over seven and a half years from the day we started, there were just over 1,600 connections to the Yucca Valley system and several hundred miles of TV cable from Morongo Valley to Sunfair," said Groom.

He gives full credit to Mrs. Wilson and her checking trip to Victorville, which enabled him to build the local system. Now living in Hemet, he sent a reminiscing letter to her in which he said, "I thank you and all of the very wonderful people in Yucca Valley for all that you have given me. Even though it was a big undertaking, I couldn't have done it without you or them.

THE CABLE OFFICE on Bannock Trail in the late fifties.

"I lay awake many nights worrying about all of the problems that confronted me from day to day in building it. At times I was discouraged for sure, but somehow managed to keep going and building more lines.

"I remember one night about 2:30 a.m., some kind soul who had had too much to drink phoned me and gave me hell because his TV picture was blurry and he couldn't see it.

Ron Presley

IN 1977 the Cable Company had changed hands several times. Each time the system was improved.

"Then there was another time John (His younger brother) and I worked nearly all night in a blizzard putting up broken cables that had been torn down by the storm. We nearly froze to death that night climbing poles. It was the night that they had that dinner at the Copper Room honoring those of us who had helped the hospital cause in Yucca Valley. I still have that plaque that John Haskell gave me. But when I look at it I can only see snow flakes swirling in the wind on a freezing night in Yucca Valley.

"Yucca Valley, for sure, will always have a warm spot in my heart for all of the wonderful people there. I will always treasure the fond memories that I have of the town and that part of it was of my life."

Neal did more than just express his feelings. He really gave his full assistance to a local Cancer Drive one year. At his own expenditure of a great deal of time and money, he held a telethon over his own cable station originating from the Multi-purpose Room of the Yucca Valley Elementary School. He got the use of six phones okayed from the Palm Springs telephone office and borrowed a camera. They were on the air and everyone in town was watching his own or a friend's set!

George Osborn was the volunteer master of ceremonies. The first call came in from Leo Higgins, saying he could donate $50 if George would stand on his head. George did it, right on camera. A second caller said he'd toss in another $50 is George would do it again. He did, thereby helping Yucca Valley to reach its goal and then some.

Charlotte Gibbon went to work for the original Lucerne Valley Engineering Co. in 1964, and ran the office end of things. She resigned from Westinghouse Group W Cable on April 15, 1982, making her the oldest employee, in time of service, of the combined cable company ownerships.

Since Groom's day, the local TV system has been owned by Hi-Desert TV Cable, Inc. (Able Cable) and Teleprompter. The latter was purchased by Westinghouse and is known as Group W Cable. The little system that started with less than thirty subscribers now has 10,000 customers signed up.

"Cable TV can be thought of as a Community Antenna (CATV). The signal (television broadcast) is received at a distant antenna site and is sent down a large cable (trunk line) which is routed and amplified through the town. A distribution cable comes from the trunk line. This distribution cable feeds the individual (subscriber) installations.

"Warning: electrical storms can be quite damaging to CATV equipment. It can travel down the lines for miles, doing extensive damage which can take considerable time to fix." (Editor's Note: Checking all on-spot, adjacent, nearby and connecting points.)

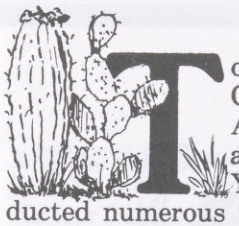
"Although our cable is grounded during an electrical storm, it is a good habit for the individual subscriber to disconnect his TV set from the cable, and, also, unplug it from the wall socket, since he could also get a 'power surge' through the wall socket." (Editor's Note: Very good advice which could save the cable subscriber a good deal of grief and expense.) ■

As the state of the art improved, so did the cable system in Yucca Valley. The last two operators, Teleprompter and Group W, have effected the most improvement, mostly due to an ever-growing subscription and the ever-present possibility of competition.

Ron Presley

Ron Presley

Yucca Valley Art Association



Toward the mid-1960's Artist Chesta L. Spencer and his wife, Angela, invited many fellow artists to their studio-home in Yucca Valley and also conducted numerous field trips and outdoor paint-outs all over the desert. One day in August, 1965, they were holding a paint-out in Pioneertown. Present with the Spencers were Kirk Martin, Margaret Schoenleber, Lucile Morton, Mary Linehan, Josephine Richards and Isabel Cramer. They decided that it was definitely time to have an artists' club in Yucca Valley since there were more than enough professional and amateur artists and still more interested people to make for a lively membership. Martin reached in his pocket and donated the first $5 "to get the ball rolling."

At a meeting in the Spencer home on September 28, 1965, fifteen artists were gathered to decide on a name for the new organization. A number of names were submitted. The one that was adopted was Hi-Desert Studio Guild, suggested by the late Hildegard Metzger. Along with Chet Spencer, the founder, the charter members of the guild were Lucile Morton, Florence Golterman, Margaret Schoenleber, Kirk Martin, Mary Linehan, Hildegard Metzger, Dr. Rodney Pack, Marcia Terrell, Isabel Cramer, Jack Brenda, Arlet Collie, Angela Spencer, Peter Eagle and Josephine Richards.

Spencer was elected charter president; Brenda, treasurer; and Margaret Schoenleber, secretary.

The Spencers had already started a Youth Program prior to the existence of the guild, so it was only natural for the new organization to sponsor a Youth Art Class in the summer of 1966. Gertrude Perrine was selected as the art teacher. Later, Brenda took over the Youth Program. Lessons for youngsters were free. The regular classes have since been sponsored by the Yucca Valley Parks and Recreation District as both Youth and Adults classes, with Brenda and Erma Washburn as instructors.

Early in 1967, the members decided to change the name of their organization. They voted to call it the Yucca Valley Art Association. The new title was officially accepted on April 18, 1967. The association was incorporated on July 31, 1968.

The Spencers were quite active in trying to arrange public displays of local artists' works. The first such display, other than at professional studios and galleries, was shown at the Security Pacific Bank in Yucca Valley. The showing was very well received and now local art works can be seen on a rotation schedule in many business establishments. Nick Yellenti is another member who has devoted years to transporting and hanging of other artists' works in public and private business houses throughout the lower and high deserts.

The association's pledge is "To make Yucca Valley a Fine Arts Center and promote a cultural atmosphere in our Hi-Desert community." The first yearbook was produced by Angela Spencer for the club year of 1971-72. Her husband had passed away before the impressive yearbook came out. She was assisted by Thelma Irby, Ann Phillips, Grace Clark and Margaret Austin, The cover was drawn by Katholeen Perry.

Sixty-four works of member artists were included in the yearbook. There were 164 members at that time. Photographer Burton Frasher, Jr., took pictures of the art work and the yearbook was edited and published by the Artcraft Print Shop. The selected works included portraits, landscapes, seascapes, rural scenes and still life. It was hoped the yearbook would be adopted as an annual association project.

Member artists whose work was represented were Grace Clark, Joe Rocke, Mabel Cone, Ruth C. Lawson, Bertha Carr, Harry Sabol, Thelma Powell Gunn, Dorothy Pippitt, Kate Mills, Marie Gustafson, Erma Woody, May Crozier, Jack Brenda, Ruth Wainscott, Zelma Bickmore, Bessie Ellsworth "deVeer," Madlyne Murray Seale, Eulalie Reid, Ethel Williams, Vivian Miller, Anne Long, Peggy Stuart "Marne," Theola Smith, Frances Like, Jay Funk, Sally Green, Angela Spencer, Chester L. Spencer, Omer Carroll Rudrud, Georgia Mount, Irene Scoggin, Lucile Morton, Olga Pat Murphy, Mabel Eloise Selzer, Kimley Jackson, Verne Gillespie, Mayme Stannard, Margaret L. Austin, Murl Starr Cushman, Louise Renfro, Floranell Tinsman, Mollie Graham, Nell Havemann, Fran Evans, Marian A. Olsen, Pat Wilber, Kathi Hilton, Charles McMahon, Maxine Fordyce, Marcia Terrell, Bennie Mae De Vault and William F. Staunton, Jr. Two photographs were also included of a collection of sculpted figures by Lois Clarke.

Association activities during the year, in addition to members working on their own creations, include the Annual Art Festival in October; the Grubstake Days Art Festival in May; the Annual Christmas Dinner Party; and the Installation Dinner. There are also demonstrations at the regular meetings. The 1971-72 Yearbook disclosed that Mollie Graham, Fred Penney, Rafael Daraio, Maxine Fordyce, Marshall Merritt and Lyle V. Ball gave demonstrations of their works in various media. At a May paint-out at the Spencer home the guests were the Shadow Mountain Palette Club, Desert Art Center and the Yucca Valley Art Association.

A Citizen of Merit . . . . .

How do you say goodbye to someone who has meant so much to so many people? How do you let her know how much you appreciate all she has done done for the community? How do you show your good friend that you care?

In one of the biggest turnouts in the town's history, the people of the Hi-Desert came to an Appreciation Dinner to do just that for Mrs. Phyllis O. Grubaugh on July 1, 1979. The awards event was sponsored by the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and was held at the Scenic Mountain Club, which was filled to overflowing.

They were gathered to pay homage to a lady who was terminally ill with cancer and who had done so much for Yucca Valley and many of the other communities in the Morongo Basin.

Phyllis and her three young children — Robin, Jay and Gale - had returned to the United States and California following the death of her husband, James C. Grubaugh, a USAF officer who had been killed in a plane crash in West Germany. She and the children settled in Yucca Valley in 1958, where she entered the realm of real estate.

Through the years she worked for the E.R. "Bill" Williams Real Estate Office, Frances Ross Real Estate, Marvin Krantz Paradise Valley Realtor, Sky Harbor Estates and Ranchos and Art Miller's Western Hills Estates. She was a member and officer of the Yucca Valley Board of Realtors and in 1965 served as its president.

Then, in 1974, she went to work at the Empire Savings and Loan Association office, in Yucca Valley. It was here that Phyllis suggested a good-will idea to the manager, Mildred Radzke, which was quickly adopted — providing free bus service one day a week as a benefit to those residents, especially the older ones, so they might be able to do their shopping and conduct their business. (This service preceded the county-sponsored Senior Citizen Dial-A-Ride Program.) In 1975 Allstate Savings and Loan Association bought out Empire, Mrs. Radzke retired and Phyllis became the manager, a position she held until shortly before her death.

These are the bare-bone facts. Her interests and her actions tell much more about her. She set up the sick and elderly daily phone call-ins to check if these people were all right; she saw to it that those who might have gone without were provided holiday dinners courtesy of the Colonel's Kentucky Fried Chicken but which

PHYLLIS O. GRUBAUGH,
A Lady who cared

were paid for by Empire and which were delivered by Yucca Valley's own cabbie, LeRoy Tolen; she worked long and hard to establish a Yucca Valley home for the Indoor Sports, a national organization of wheelchair handicapped people. All of her continuing efforts on this last project became fruitless when another site was chosen for the Indoor Sports.

Anyone who was in trouble or needed assistance could count on her to help out in some way.

Although she never served as a director, she also never missed a board meeting of the Morongo Unified School District, the Hi-Desert County Water District, the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital District and most of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce meetings.

She was always interested in youth activities for the sake of her own and all the other Yucca Valley children. At the Appreciation Dinner, Al Gilbert, then MUSD Superintendent, told of an earlier day when he was the teaching principal at Yucca Valley Elementary School. He said he was working at his desk one afternoon when a slim shadow fell across his work. He look up to see a smiling face which then became serious. Phyllis introduced herself, said she and her family had just recently moved to Yucca Valley and she was concerned that there was no Little League or boys' baseball team in town. Al said before he knew it he was swept up in the whirlwind of activity and, presto, "we had a baseball team."

Before, during and after her tenure on the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, she was instrumental in starting many of the youth sports programs, providing night lights for the tennis courts, assisting in the land and legal details of acquiring Machris Park,

. . . . . Phyllis Grubaugh

getting the Yucca Valley Swim Team started as well as the preliminary work on the Community Center Complex.

No one who attended those earlier Cutting Horse Exhibitions, Yucca Valley Swim Team Meets, Little League Baseball games or the Yucca Valley Trojans Varsity Football games will ever forget Phyllis' loud and very enthusiastic cheering for her children and the teams; nor her infectious laughter at any funny happening.

As an indication of her full schedule of interests and active support, at the dinner she received the following plaques and citations of merit:

Easter Seal Society, four separate citations dating from 1974 to 1978; Muscular Dystrophy Association; Yucca Valley Art Association; Hi-Desert Playhouse Guild, Inc., where she served as president in 1976; Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club; American Association of Retired Persons; and the HDMH Guild.

She also received: the Distinguished Service Award from the Southern California Chapter of the National Arthritis Foundation; the Outstanding Service Award of the MUSD; the Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award of the Soroptimist International of Yucca Valley; the Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce; the Outstanding Service and Leadership Award of the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District; and a special award for 20 years of outstanding service to Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, Inc.

She was also presented with a U.S. Congressional Resolution of Commendation which Representative Jerry Lewis had read on the floor of the U.S. Congress and which was entered into the Congressional Record.

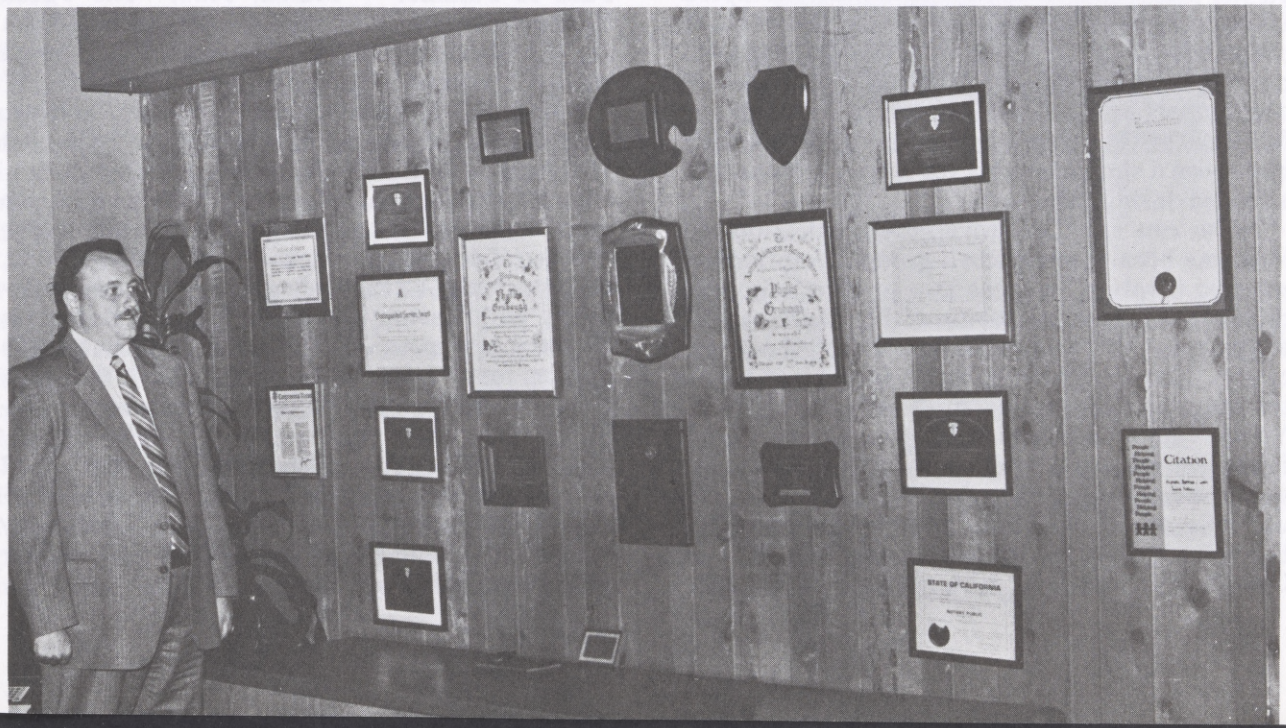
Still another honor was a State Resolution presented to her by State Senator Robert B. Presley and Assemblyman William R. Leonard which had been read and recorded in the State Capitol in Sacramento. It commended her "for her tireless service to the people and to the area" and for receiving the chamber's highest award.

It was typical of Phyllis that, despite her weakened condition, as each award was presented she stood up, accepted it and thanked the donor-representative. In keeping with her spirit, the entire program was kept in a light vein. Then, at the conclusion, everybody departed and, in the privacy of their own cars and their homes, they wept for Phyllis, for her family and for the loss of a true friend.

Phyllis Grubaugh died on July 8, 1979, and is buried beside her husband in the Park View Cemetery, in Stockton, California.

Her son, Jay, lives in Spokane, Washington, and her two daughters, Robin Grubaugh and Gale Lewis, continue to live in Yucca Valley. ■

PHYLLIS GRUBAUGH was a person who gave much of herself. Her awards and citations, shown Below, attest to a broad spectrum of appreciation of her work.



Yucca Valley Players

When M. Brooks Buxton was asked to supply research material for "The Heritage of Yucca Valley," he, aided by Kenn Witting, supplied volumes. The following passage from "Histerical Notes By The Historian," was written by Buxton and is typical of his humor and his sense of humanity.

"It all happened something like this. Yucca Valley, the town we live in, was then in its youth. I am not sure that it isn't still in its youth. Be that as it may, very little in the nature of local entertainment had blessed the valley at that time. Somehow a couple of meagre efforts in that direction had been endured by the gentry in the form of an amateurish musical, 'Kowhand Kapers,' and a hand-hewn 'who-dunnit' called 'Checkmate.'

FROM A Yucca Valley Players, "Playbill" in the mid 1950

"Without rhyme or reason these broken down vehicles proved to be financial successes, cast as they were with volunteer talent. Much of the glory can be attributed to the fact that both were benefit performances for worthy local causes. That was way back in 1953 A.D.

"The astounding part of the whole thing lies in the phenomenal effect these productions had upon the participants. It may have been prompted by mercenary inclinations. After all, one of these people were oblivious to the swift current of cash pouring in from the gullible public. Then, again, it could have been the thrill of hearing the applause for their efforts over the footlights; or, it may have been a simple craving for the companionship afforded during rehearsals.

"Who can say? Whatever the inspiration, an idea was born. Soon a small group, comprised of persons involved in these two productions, was called together at the home of Floyd Peters for the purpose of forming some sort of theatrical club . . . On that fateful night, God bless them, they organized a theatre guild and named it The Yucca Valley Community Players. Forthwith officers were elected and, thus, they bonded together until desperation do them part. The minutes of a subsequent meeting carry the names of those intrepid hams, glorified under the titles of Charter Members."

Those minutes, dated December 16, 1953, reflect that the fledgling thespians and charter members were Floyd J. and Charlsie Peters, Ruble and Minette Caerbert, Goerge and Lola Scott, Kirk and Laurel Martin, Martha Knott (Jeffries), Paul and Muriel Perrin, Vesta Peters, Kenn Witting, M. Brooks and Margaret Buxton, Harold and Irene Westcott and Ruth English.

Actually, everyone on stage and in the audiences had discovered how much fun there was to be had in putting on their own plays and shows. They had all had a taste of it and they all wanted more. And that was what generated the Players and the audiences from the very start — the fun.

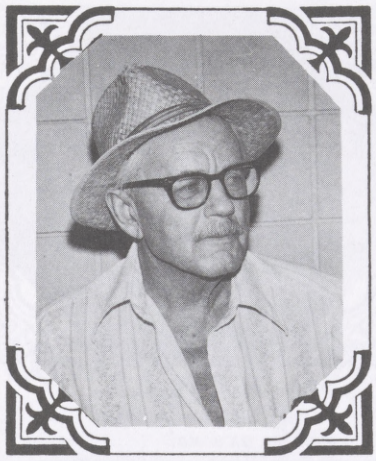
Therefore, following a great deal of rehearsal time and even more public anticipation, on April 7, 1954, the curtain rose on The Yucca Valley Community Players' first production, "He Ain't Done Right By Nell." It was produced on the stage of the Community Service Club. Directed by Witting, it starred Bernice Ferris, Vesta Peters, Harold Westcott, Anna Lee Beard, Laurel Martin, George Scott and Ruble Caerbert.

It was more than a success. They even got to take it on the road — to Twentynine Palms, for a Chamber of Commerce benefit there.

After that there was no holding them back, they were off and very enthusiastically running. On a schedule reminiscent of the old motion picture studio contract players' days before the advent of the Screen Actors' Guild, the local group dove in, happily, and produced and staged "Which Shall He Marry" and "Stoney's Brides" — July, 1954; "Plumber vs. Plumber" - August, 1954; "Ghost Road" - September, 1954; "Your Face Is Familiar" - March, 1955; "The Yucca Valley Follies of 1955" - May, 1955; "Dirty Work at At The Crossroads" - August, 1955; "Yucca Valley Varieties" - November, 1955; "Lost Gold" March, 1956; "Take Your Medicine" - May, 1956; "Ready Made Family" - August, 1956; and "Lo And Behold" - October, 1956.

In September of 1954, the Players voted to drop the word "Community" from their name and they became The Yucca Valley Players. Then, in the summer of 1955, they opened up a bank account and started a Building Fund. But their primary goal remained the same. "Everyone was having fun," said Buxton. "After all, that was our purpose. No one had any aspirations for professional acclaim."

At the end of 1956, in order to insure the use of the Community Service Club for their productions, the Players entered into a one year contract. They would have the use of the hall for four plays, plus rehearsal time.



KENN WITTING, charter member, Director and all around hard worker.

The plays produced under the contract that year of 1957, were "The Late Christopher Bean," March; "Abie's Irish Rose," May; and "Adam's Evening," August. A fourth play was scheduled but had to be dropped, forfeiting the production dates and box office receipts.

"Everyone was beat, exhausted, expended, drained, tired out, bushed and completely lifeless," said Buxton. . . "Somewhere along the line the original idea had been lost. Before the contract, their only desire had been the enjoyment of dramatics. Under the contract it had become another. Under the contract it had bexome drudgery. It was decided to recess and rest and never again bind themselves to any fixed schedule of regimentation."

June 19, 1958, was a happy night when "The Tender Trap" opened at the Yucca Valley Elementary School Multipurpose Room. It was directed by Nick Yellenti and the magic and the enthusiasm were back.

"The dramatic success was unquestionable," said Buxton, "the Players were again in business."

Indeed, staging their productions in either the Elementary School, on the Yucca Valley High School stage, the Burnt Mountain Dude Ranch patio or the American Legion Hall stage they continued on with spirits and artistic sould free in such enterprises as the "Remember When Variety Show" and "Motel Madness - November, 1958; "Rebel Without a Cause" - March, 1959; "My Three Angels" - June, 1959; "The Brat" - November, 1959; "The Curious Savage" - February, 1960; "See How They Run" - June, 1960; "The Bad Man" - December, 1960; "The White Sheep Of The Family" - April, 1961; "Mr. Christmas" - December, 1961; "John Loves Mary" - March, 1962;"The Just And The Damned" - June, 1962; "Pistol Pete" - August, 1962; "The Eager Miss Beaver" - December, 1962; "The Mousetrap" - April, 1963; "The Bad Man" - reprised - July, 1963; "Grubstake Gladys" - December, 1963, and May, 1964; "Hong Kong Hotel" - September, 1964; "The Colonel's Niece" - December, 1964; Grubstake Gladys" - starting a trend, May, 1965; "Everybody Loves Opal" - November, 1965;"Under The Sycamore Tree" - June, 1966; "Grubstake Gladys In Denver" - May, 1967; "Outward Bound" - October, 1967; "They Honeymoon is Over" - January, 1968; "The Movie Man" - March, 1968; "Grubstake Gladys In The Yukon" - May, 1968; "Mister Peepers" - November, 1968; "Hong Kong Hotel" - reprise - March, 1969; "Grubstake Gladys In Texas" - May, 1969; "Ten Little Indians" - August, 1969; "Bus Stop" - November, 1969; "Tobacco Road" - March, 1970; "Grubstake Gladys In Nevada" - May, 1970; "High Cockalorum" - September, 1970; "Mid-Winter Capters" - February, 1971; "The Good Ship Humidor" - May and June, 1971; "It Happened in Monterey" - September, 1971; "Grubstake Gladys In The Yukon" - reprise - May and June, 1973; "Come Blow Your Horn" - September and October, 1973; and "George Washington Slept Here" - November and December, 1973.

During the twenty years the Players were active, Kenn Witting directed 21 plays; Buxton, 12; Chris Virden, 5; Wes Johnson, 3; Norval Jeffries, 2; Lewis Bradshaw, 2; Nick Yellenti, 2; Dee White, 2; Janice Burke, 2; and Bernice Buchanan, Sherm Wehrung, Ernest Crutcher, Dorie Pope and Bill Groves one apiece.

THE YUCCA VALLEY Players Production of "The Good Ship Humidor," in 1971

There were 286 local actors, singers, dancers and musicians who appeared in Yucca Valley Players' productions from 1953 through 1973. Some were shy at first but, as they appeared in many plays and gained experience and poise, other family members joined, too, and took their place on the boards. It happened over and over.

Those who were on stage for the Players include Ruth Collins, Tyna English, Dick Peters, Clyde Barth, Ruth English, Joyce Pitcher, Jackie

Horton, Sandy Harmon, Nancy Marble, Scottie Marble, Roxy Caerbert, Frances Derden, Diane Urmston, Muriel Perrin, Sandi Peters, Paul Perrin, Floyd J. Peters, Kenn Witting, Fred Landgraf, John Arch, Charlsie Peters, Jo Engle, Joan Papendick, Jack Newton, Margaret Buxton, M. Brooks Buxton, Lola Scott, Sandra Peters, Debbie Jernberg, Bessie Gordon, Harry Wallman, Dorothy Ballard, Martha Jeffries, Gene Peterson, Norval Jeffries, Carol Peters, Judy Hammett, Millie Bayes and Ellie Bayes.

Also, Gloria Allee, Midge Tunstall, Sally Peters, Larry Gray, Helene Fisher, Betty Brownell, Bob Brownell, April Jernberg, Al Fisher, Minette Caerbert, Betty Blackburn, Bob Wadle, Jack Aleo, Marguerite Scheuler, Jimmie Hodges, Jack Jecker, Ralph Kingston, Louise Gray, Marvin Katka, Wesley L. Johnson, Bob Brownell, Jr., Duke Hemsley, Gwen Johnson, Dorothy Kingston, Bill French, Elizabeth Gordon, Steve Stine,Harlan Shippee, Paul Hammett, Jean Arch, Patrick Doonan, Jack Sundin, Norman Poulsen, Debbie Shippee, Charlene Bradshaw, Charleen Wilson, Chris Hammett, Gussie Sothman, Myrl Rupel, Georgene Bradshaw, Brad Bradshaw, Rodney Jones, Eunice Rupel, Joe Scott and William Greene.

Others were Horace Rich, Jessie Rae Taylor, Marguerite Hardesty, Melody Scott, Fred Smith, Sr., Bud Buxton, Bob McKay, Darb Bradshaw, Virginia Yellenti, Louise Witting, Ross Weber, Fred Smith, Jr., Frank Heard, Valerie Bradshaw, Joan Valerie, Arthur Acason, Alaris Bradshaw, Jo Ellen Valkis, Cab Caerbert, Gary Collins, Hazel Hitch, Bernice Buchanan, Susie Buchanan, Sharon Collins, Marian Collins, Pat Dotter, Greg Dotter, Bill Dotter, Bill Harmon, Bob Botts, Jim Linehan, O.L. Scheibler, Fern Scheibler, Jack Klempner, Nancy Garber, Toby Price, Betty Claus, Bessie Truehart, Danny Delahoyde, Gloria Treuhart, Ainslee Fowler, Jo Lafferty, Bob Fowler, B.R. Clements, Jr., Sharon Littleton, Dee White, Gladys Buchanan, Eileen Wells, Sharon Streeter, Gary DeRosier, Purssell O'Neal, Betty Vogel, Barry Johnson, Imogene Jones, June Ginn, Ruby Sims, Ed Burke, James Mitchell, Ernie Cameron, Fred Eubanks, John Steele, Claudia Kingston, Jim Buchanan and Fred Wheeler.

Still others were Melba Carlton, Ronnie Ash, Dick Hapsburg, Kay Brown, Bill Pace, Janice Burke, Coy Foster, Sherm Wehrung, Ray North, Anthony Tumolo, Danny Lang, Merlene Wellman, Kathy Arch, Marlene Warren, Doreen Smith, Carolyn Maiefski, Juanita Smith, Tom Proctor, Bill Nicely, Denny Helps, Gus Kaskel, Cora Cotter, Randi Procter, Dick Dawes, Laura Cernich, El Gato (!), Martha Barsczcz, Rick Murdock, Jim Cox, Don Massey, Jane Goold, Steve Gilbert, Marti Smith, Rick Walker, Steffy Schoenleber, Bill Booth, John Waysilk, LeRoy Schwenk, Chris Virden, Carey McCarter, Anita Wilkinson, Mike Fanberg, Joe McConnell, Verna

THE 1969 Production of "Ten Little Indians" A success, as usual.

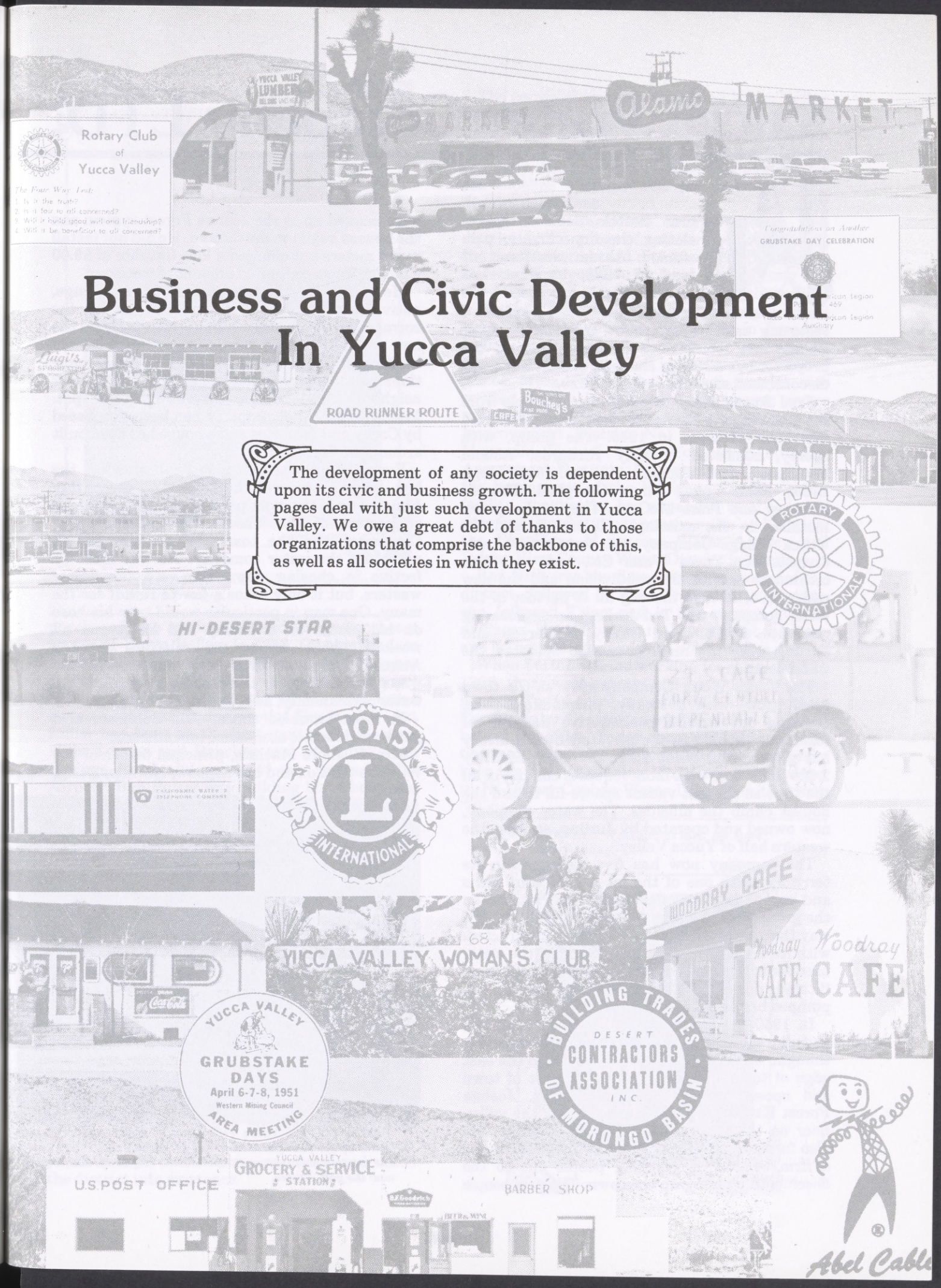
Fagan, Orville McCarter, Dorie Pope, Pat Rubak, John Springler, Charlene King, Brandon Kelly, Noel Virden, Bob Hand, Maria Bowden, John Garcia, Virgil Schooley, Ed Nau, Walter Barden, Ron Young, David Browning, Richard Miller, Tony Cross, Rochelle Garcia, Linda Rusterholtz, Mary Browning, Peppe Aloi and Doyle Browning.

And still others were Robin Robbins, Sherry Browning, Tammy Browning, Chuck Browning, Jack Cobden, Chuck Young, Joe Cook, Paul Mounce, June McCracken, Tom McGuire, Gene Barkdoll, Tillie Brown, Laura Lei Cox, Betty Fanberg, Jeane Pope, Don Stout, Dianne Cherry, Gene Selzer, Mary Delahoyde, Zella Virden, Cliff Selzer, Sandi Chapman, Ed Smith, Steven Garcia, Ethel McGuire, Alta Gilbert, Hilda Cobden, Phyllis Marshall, Stocky Stockbridge, Jeanie Selzer, Betty Mounce, Jenny Reis, Mary Craig, John and Rosemary Piraino, Jason, Jane Albertson, Pete Richards, John and Dorothy Porter, Carroll Rudrud, Steve Kessler, Mike Virden, Mary Lou Fleming, Sean Callaghan, Louise McCoy, Marilyn Mitchell, Gary Licher, Jim Romoser, Don Van Horn, III, Pam Bishop, Arlene Smelko, Gary Schuler, Janice Talbert, Mitch Sanders, Beverly Dragonette, Warren Lavender, Delcie Vuncannon, Joy Groves, Brian Matthews, Dianne Maline, Patricia Matthews, Steven Miller, Kenice White, John Linville and Fred Eubanks.

There was one more Player listed who should not be slighted here, the notorious and traditional "Phil Inne."

Certainly one of the foremost guiding lights of the Players, Buxton wrote eleven original plays and musicals for the group. They were "Checkmate," "Yucca Valley Follies of 1955," "Lost Gold," "The Just And The Damned," the entire "Grubstake Gladys" series, "Hong Kong Hotel" and "It Happened In Monterey." Mrs. Bertha Saunders Clark, then of Joshua Tree, was the author of "The Colonel's Niece."

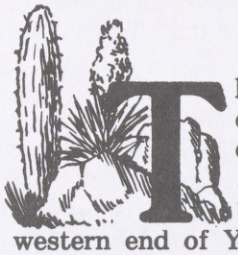
Looking back over the years, they should all be happy people. They accomplished what they started. It was fun, while it lasted! ■



Business and Civic Development In Yucca Valley

The development of any society is dependent upon its civic and business growth. The following pages deal with just such development in Yucca Valley. We owe a great debt of thanks to those organizations that comprise the backbone of this, as well as all societies in which they exist.

Yucca Water Company LTD.



Three Seattle doctors, appreciating the dry climate, purchased three sections of land in 1926, in what was, ultimately to become the western end of Yucca Valley. They intended a restoring sanatorium, to be called the Alpine Sanatorium Hotel. A well was drilled on the property, but all plans changed and all work was discontinued after the Crash of 1929.

Fred Storey and a select group of people from the Los Angeles-Orange County area purchased the three sections in 1945. The group, with Storey, consisted of Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Tamplis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estes, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Thomas Bouchey and Flora McCann. They had a pump installed in the existing well and formed the Yucca Village Company, the town's first subdivison. The Yucca Water Co., Ltd., was also created to service the subdivision and the new residents who were moving in. A partner in the water company was Ted Jurling, an engineering graduate of Cal-Tech. Storey, Anderson and Jurling were the main ones who operated the water company.

The Yucca Water Company grew as the town itself grew—with a steady, phemominal pace. Starting out with a comparative handful of residential hook-ups, the privately-owned utility has grown until today there are approximately 2,600 hook-ups, with more requests coming in all the time as the last vacant spaces fill in and the houses climb the hillsides. The water company, now owned and operated by Jurling, services the western half of Yucca Valley.

The company now has five wells within its territory, with one of the most successful wells and pumps in the system being that located on the grounds of the Blue Skies Country Club. The way the golf course was laid out and constructed, with its underground grid of pipelines, the water used for irrigating the fairway and greens is deep-filtered down to a subterranean strata and pumped back up for future use.

In 1950, Al Anderson struck out for himself and did something the more timid townspeople thought was crazy. He didn't go just to the east edge of town—he went "way out" east of town and opened up his own subdivision, Joshua Forest Estates, which extended along the valley floor on the north side of Burnt Mountain. He also formed the Joshua Forest Water Co. He was a firm believer in bringing people out to the desert and building up the town. The new people were hooked up to the Joshua Forest system and the houses began to mushroom. He did not install water meters but charged a low, flat rate of $3.00 a month for an unlimited amount of water.

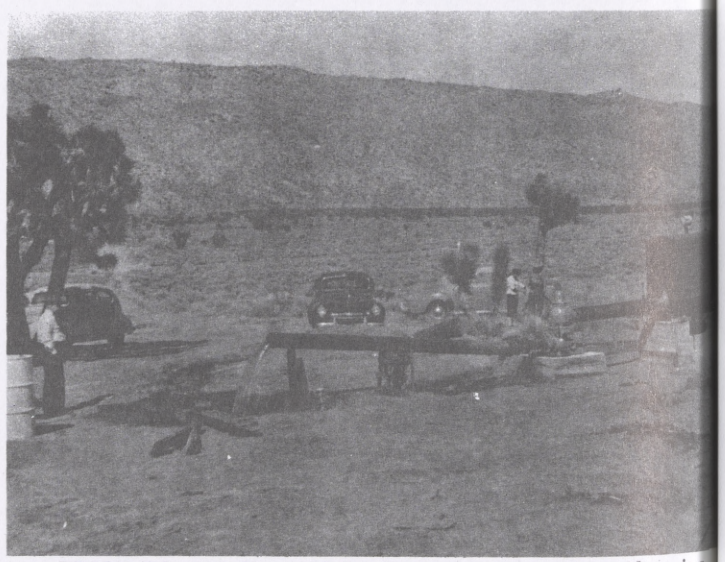
He built a big concrete patio floor and a huge, native-rock fireplace and barbecue pit by the corral at his ranch on Joshua View and told all the new property owners it was for their use to hold barbecues, dances, sing-a-longs and social functions so they could all get acquainted with their neighbors. Needless to say, it was a popular spot. Most recently that property has been purchased by Corky and Jean Kee and a house has been built around the fireplace.

Even though the new area kept growing, the low water rate was hurting Anderson. Roy Roush, one of the most persistent and staunchest supporters of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and the town, helped him out in operating the water company. He was most effective in chasing down the very few water wasters, but it only takes a few to ruin it for the many. One man in particular would turn his hose on his plants on a Friday and let it run all weekend while he visited relatives in Los Angeles. Roush would drive by and turn off the water and finally, by threatening to turn off the water permanently, he broke him out of the habit.

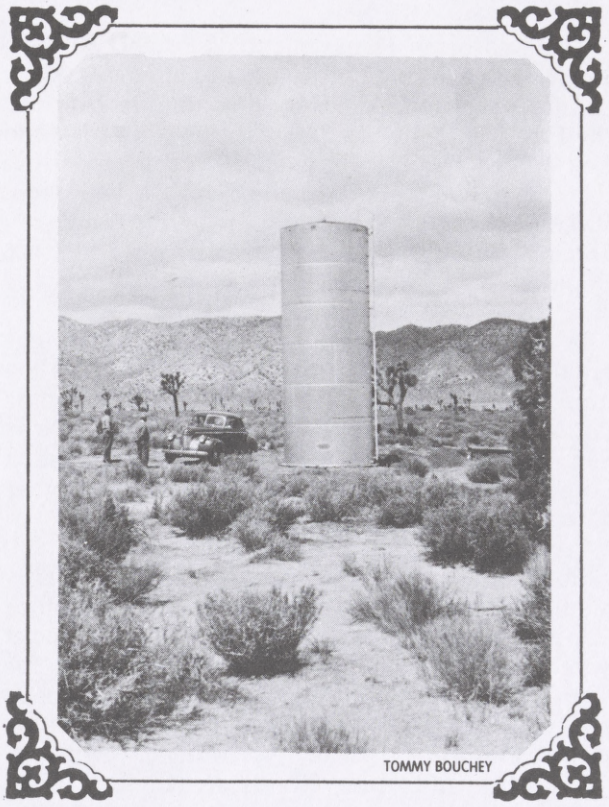
In those troubled times, Jule Boldizsar also gave considerable assistance to Anderson.

Mrs. Elsinore Machris, principal owner of the Wilshire Oil Co., and her nephew, Norman Essig,

TOMMY BOUCH



PRIOR TO 1956, Yucca Valley had no water system. Above is a photo of the first functional well in Yucca Valleys first water system. The original well was north of 29 Palms Highway, not far from what is now the golf course.



THE FIRST WATER tank. The water system and Yucca Valley are growing.

purchased two sections of land in the southeast corner of Yucca Valley, in 1958. On this land, in two increments, they developed Sky Harbor Ranchos and Estates. Developer Robert Schoenleber had also opened up the Alta Loma Estates subdivision due west of Sky Harbor. Art Miller had built up the first unit of his Western Hills Estates and Ranchos east of Old Woman Springs Road and north of the Yucca Valley Airport. Bob Potter was building his subdivision south of the Twentynine Palms Highway and flanking Hanford.

By now Anderson, as ill from the bursting of a dream as from his physical ailments, could no longer go on. Essig and Schoenleber took over the operation of the water company.

Time passed and ore people moved in, more hook-ups were made. Then came an unexpected blow—the California Public Utilities Commission told them they could not sell any more property or build any more houses, there was only water enough for those already living in Yucca Valley. Additional geological studies assured them there was enough water for further expansion, so the principals set about establishing the groundwork for a County Water District, which is self-governing.

Essig, Schoenleber, Miller and Potter all created their own water systems in their subdivisions. These systems were to be turned over to the district if the voters approved and voted the district into existence.

The people did vote to create the Yucca Valley County Water District in 1964. They also approved the original (parent) district bond in excess of $200,000. Anderson was paid for his company, the four subdividers were paid off for the pipeline systems and the rest went into district operations.

There was immediate interest in the new district in a number of quarters. Almost before the newly-sworn board directors—Harold Brown, Norman Granger, Lou Holland, Norm Essig and Art Miller—got comfortably seated in the earliest meetings, Ted Strong, general manager of the Rancho Ramon Mutual Water Co., in Paradise Valley, expressed an interest in joining the district. It soon did. Next in line were sections of Yucca Mesa. When the original district was created it took in approximately eleven square miles. With the addition, through the years, of Improvement District No. 1, in Yucca Mesa; Mountain Mutual Water Co.; seven different Assessment Districts; Improvement Zone F; and the buying out of the Hacienda Heights water facility, the district has expanded until today it encompasses forty-four square miles and borders the Big Horn Mountains Water Agency and Desert View County Water District in Landers.

Ron Rick was the first general manager of the district, followed by Fred Tripp. Ernest Thompson followed Tripp and is the current general manager. Harold Sutton is the assistant manager and is the oldest employee in point of time.

When Sutton started working for the district in 1968, there were exactly 900 hook-ups for water service. Today there are over 3,850. The Joshua Forest Water Co. started with Well No. 1 located behind the office. Today there are four wells and ten tank reservoirs. Fifteen full-time employees keep the district running. The name was changed to Hi-Desert County Water District in the early '70's.

FLOWING WATER, at last. No more water hauling.

Other citizens who have served as district board directors through the years include Perry Maynard, John Delahoyd, Jule Boldizsar, Fred Bishop, John Flowers, C.P. Dennhardt, William E. White, Harold Dunn, Thaddeus "Ted" Strong, Donald McDowell, Jean Nichols, Robert Stephenson, Eugene Riggs, Lee Kenney, James Wallace, A.J. Napier, George Bruen, Leonard Malin and Harry Marshall.

The Hi-Desert County Water District is a part of the Mojave Water Agency, a purveyor for the State of California Feather River Water Project. The people of the local district voted to join the MWA on July 13, 1965.

On July 5, 1972, the Hi-Desert district experienced its only real water crisis. The water system broke down completely due to mechanical problems and structural difficulties with the main well. An early report suggested that the well's structure could have been damaged by underground movement caused by the February, 1972, destructive earthquake centered in Sylmar and which damaged large portions of the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles area. But, this was never proved.

Following 1st District Supervisor Bill Betterley's request, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors declared a state of local emergency. The County Department of Communications and Disaster Services began organizing the emergency effort with local coordination under the direction of the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District. The county's declaration also set in motion emergency help from state and federal agencies.

Over eight miles, or 43,000 feet of six-inch aluminum fire-fighting pipe belonging to the State Office of Emergency Services and stored throughout Southern California was sent at the request of Jack Burke, county Fire Warden. Burke coordinated efforts to install a temporary water main that connected the Yucca Valley district with the Joshua Basin County Water District, eight miles to the east in Joshua Tree.

TOMMY BOUCHEY

TOM BOUCHEY and daughter June, early residents watch as the water system starts to work. The Boucheys later built the restaurant which was a Yucca Valley Landmark for years. The pump they are watching was not too far from Bouchey's Restaurant.

The California Department of Forestry in the counties of San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura, Orange and Riverside; the Barstow Fire District; the Fire Departments of El Centro, La Mesa and Los Angeles County transported the pipe from their own emergency stock-piles. Marines from Twentynine Palms assisted in laying and connecting the pipe. Two work crews from the State Department of Correction also helped lay the pipe.

In the meantime, before the pipe arrived, eight tank trucks were dispatched to Yucca Valley from the County Road Department, Twentynine Palms Marine Base and Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, to shuttle water from Joshua Tree to the local district reservoir on Palomar Avenue.

Crews continued to haul loads of 1,000 to 1,800 gallons of water while the pipeline was being readied. Then, to act as relay pumping stations along the up-hill pipeline, eight pumper trucks were provided by the California Institute for Men, at Chino; the Corona Rehabilitation Center, at Norco; the Fire Protection Districts at Barstow, Fallbrook, Lake Arrowhead, Muscoy, Rubidoux; and the Riverside County Fire Department.

Later sixteen portable pumps were sent out from the Marine Supply Depot, at Barstow, to replace the pumper trucks once the pipeline became operative.

Additional supportive equipment was obtained from the Fire Departments of Colton, San Bernardino and San Diego.

During the two weeks the well was being repaired the pipeline provided a limited but adequate water supply to the Palomar reservoir. From there water was distributed to four other reservoirs throughout the district.

As citizens from the whole Morongo Basin turned out to see the on-the-ground pipeline grow in length and see all the people so hard at work, it was a truly warm and comforting feeling to realize that in an emergency a town is not left alone but given help from so many places by so many willing people. ■

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Western Sky Ranch Club opened in October, 1962. It later became Jellystone Park and is now Black Rock Canyon Park.

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Cornet opened on May 16, 1963. It was the first large variety store to come to Yucca Valley.

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George and Virgene Osborn opened their Broasted Chicken restaurant in 1968.

Community Service Club

The Community Service Club of Yucca Valley started life in July, 1937, to all intents and purposes, at "the better half" of the Legionnaires. However, while the twenty members always stood ready to assist their veteran husbands whenever and wherever they could, they also found projects of theirown and soon became on influence in the community in their own rights.

In writing about the club's early history, Mrs. Cyril Millington said, "There were only a few scattered homesteads in the area at that time and Morongo Valley was the 'most settled' of all. The name 'Community Service Club' was chosen because it was to take in what is now Joshua Tree, the Pipes Country (which is now Pioneertown), Yucca Valley and Morongo Valley. Since there was no organized social life, the Club was also to provide such a medium."

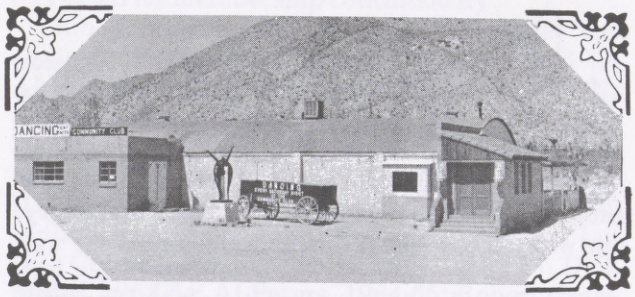
Saturday night dances, square dances, dinners, card parties and all community social functions were put on by the club.

They met in the smallest of the two school buildings on Yucca Trail, while the Legion used the largest one (now the Boy Scout Headquarters). "It was our original Community Service Club group who planted the trees that are still growing around the Boy Scout Building," said Mrs. Millington.

Still another club historian was Mrs. Charlotte Guinan, who said, ". . . The old school house was cleaned, painted and converted into the womeb's clubhouse. A two-burner gas plate was installed, cupboards built in and a long table for meetings and on which to serve refreshments was found. At one of the meetings it was voted that the club buy a good flag for the American Legion, so dinners were given, cakes and pies raffled off and eventually $125.00 was accumulated and presented to the Legion." The local post proudly displayed the newly-purchased colors at the 1938 Legion Convention in Los Angeles.

"All was not too flowery, however, as the community was made up largely of many destitute people who came out for health sake, so the club members began having dinners, rummage sales, quilting parties, quilt raffles, box lunches, etc., for much money was needed for charity funds. The women sewed layettes for the new babies. Several times checks were sent to the needy, always baskets of groceries and loads of wood went where most needed," said Mrs. Guinan.

"Sewing sessions were had, the women bringing their own machines down to the clubhouse, and those machines hummed, sewing for the hospitals. When we look back at the good old days of our pot-luck dinners which were really sumptuous — 'tis with real joy — lots of fun and good fellowship prevailed at these get-togethers. If that little building . . .could talk it would tell how its sides used to bulge from so much laughing and the activities inside," continued Mrs. Guinan.



THE Community Service Club. It is now the Elks Club.

Later the roomier building was constructed on the property donated by the Stacys. Even larger dances were held, more community events took place there including the Grubstakes Days Queen Contests and Dances. Also, the Yucca Valley Players' productions were presented there.

By far one of the most important services that the club ever provided was its First Aid Kit Campaign. In those days there were no doctors. The club invited Dr. Gill and Hal DeVoist, of Hal's Pharmacy, both of Banning, to make the trek over the rough roads to give the members lectures and First Aid lessons. "So, our next project," said Mrs. Millington, "was to purchase First Aid Kits (which Mr. DeVoist was kind enought to give us at wholesale prices) and they were placed in all filling stations, stores and wherever they seemed necessary. The club saw to it that replacements were made of the supplies every two months or as needed, and Mr. DeVoist continued to give us wholesale prices to help us keep up this very worthwhile project."

Among the first officers and members of the club were the Mesdames Lula Mae Stacy (the charter president), Myrta Guinan, Charlotte Guinan, Cyril Millington, Ray Bolster, Anna Bull, Julia Overbay, Celeste Hollinger, Berta LaFerne and Clara Livingston.

Years later the club's membership, not as active anymore, decided to sell the Community Hall property on Yucca Trail. Roy Roush, one of the local park district commissioners, worked closely with the club's board members and it was all but finalized for the district to purchase the property. However, arrangements for the sale were called off.

Still later the Yucca Valley Elks Club purchased the property.

Yucca Valley Lions Club

It was a very special occasion because it was the first service club to be organized in Yucca Valley. The newest Lions Club was to be chartered by Lions international on February 21, 1947, and everyone wanted to make it a memorable event – it was.

The weather had been holding nicely but, on the big day, naturally, it rained. Steadily. Undaunted, Tommy Bouchey, owner of the town's biggest and nicest restaurant, arranged to rent a tent, tables and chairs from the Royal Palms Hotel, in Palm Springs. It all came off just beautifully as the tent was pitched right next to the restaurant and Tommy served 200 Lions and their guests some most welcome hot food prepared in his kitchen and passed out a window into the tent. In the organizational ceremonies the charter officers sworn in here O.D. Thomas, president; and French E. Lewis, secretary-treasurer.

Probably because the club came into being in an emergency of sorts, it has since functioned continually in support of various needs of the community and long ago established a reputation for always being one of the first of the organizations to respond to calls for help or support for specific projects.

A very good example of the club's concern and its spirit of cooperation was in its determined fund-raising campaign to purchase Yucca Valley's first ambulance. As one of the club's first major undertakings, the year 1958 was devoted to this project and deeply involved all twenty members and their wives — the tremendously hard-working Dandee Lions Club.

Under the direction of Paul Perrin, president, they diligently raised $3,500.00, all of which was donated to purchase a used, but much-needed, Ford ambulance. The emergency vehicle, purchased by the Lions Club, was turned over to the Yucca Valley Fire Department for the sum of $1.00. Perrin, along with co-chairmen Luther Colvin and Roy Roush, presented the keys to the ambulance to Fire Commissioner Odis Ray. Operated and manned by the volunteer firemen, it was in service for several years.

The club also purchased an orthopedic walker which was available for the use of any citizen and maintained a local fund account for aid to the blind and those in need of glasses or treatment.

Also, in those earlier years the Lions Club members helped to get street numbers erected on all the business houses for quick and easy identification. In addition, the members went to each business house early in the morning of every holiday and put up American flags on poles in front of each establishment — a patriotic practice that is still observed today.

Working right alongside of each Lion on every club project was his wife — a Dandee Lion. The feminine branch of the club was one year old in May, 1958, and growing stronger and more influential.

The officers at that time were: Hilda Hardesty, president; Vi Ray, vice president; Betty Huntsman, secretary-treasurer; Muriel Perrin, song leader; Fern Cudihy, publicity; and Emily Howell, "nickel nabber."

The regular members were Gussie Sothmann, Edith Howell, Rose Tripodo, Edyth Bassel and daughter, Toby; Val Boldizar, Dottie Tunstall, Betty Ehrisman, Maude Landgraf, Marge Laumann, Chris Hammett, Evelyn Durant, Pat Cummins, Edith Howland and Bertha Appler. They accomplished much.

Always eager participants in the Grubstake Day Celebration, the Yucca Valley Lions Club traditionally sponsors and prepares the Annual Pancake Breakfast. The early-Saturday-morning event is held before the big parade.

In 1963, the local Lions hit upon an exciting and novel idea for raising funds to support their world-famous Sight Conservation Program. As it happened, many of the local club members were qualified, experienced pilots who owned their own well-equipped airplanes. So, they decided to stage

their Flight For The Blind over each Grubstake Days Weekend. In the five-year period the project was conducted they flew literally hundreds of people through the clear, blue sky. Many of the passengers were getting their first plane ride and all were fascinated at seeing Yucca Valley and the high desert from the air.

In more recent years the Lions Club has made special contributions to the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce's Grubstake Days financial committee, which enabled it to procure the carnivals for everyone's enjoyment.

They also operated one of the booths at the spectacularly colorful Indian Pow Wow in 1969.

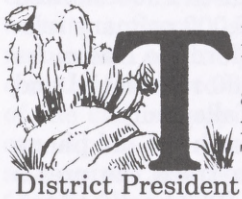
Other community programs and events, many of them youth-oriented, in which the Lions Club has been engaged over the years include: sponsoring of the Yucca Valley Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troops, the Fishing Derbies at the Blue Skies Country Club, Kite Flying Contests, Flag Programs, Ten Kilometer Run, Student Speech Contest, Christmas Gifts For The Needy and Clothes Drives for New Mexico Indians.

The primary beneficiaries of the Lions Club fund-raising activities are: Guide Dogs of the Desert, Lions Eye Institute, Yucca Valley High School Scholarship Program, support of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and support of the various Lions International Programs.

The local club, which meets twice monthly, has increased its membership continuously.

Club presidents, following in order after the charter officers, were: Tommy Bouchey, 1948-49; Al Hardesty, 1949-50; Charles Watkins, 1950-51; Tommy Humphreville, 1951-52; D.F. Geil, 1952-53; Wes Wood, 1953-54; E.R. "Bill" Williams, 1954-55; William Runyan, 1955-57, Edward Hardesty, 1957-58; Paul Perrin, 1958-59; Sam Rosenbaum, 1959-60; John Ehrisman, 1960-61; Luther Colvin, 1961-62; Leo Higgins, 1962-63; Dick Miller, 1963-64; Al Peters, 1964-65; Robert Crawford, 1965-66; Bob Roberts, 1966-67; Howard Vore, 1967-68; Leroy McCulloch, 1968-69; William Shemmer, 1969-70; Donald Cummins, 1970-71; Roger Braniger; 1971-72; Lanny Moffitt, 1972-73; Marvin Wood, 1973-74; Darryl Ovesen, 1974-75; Roy Cato, 1975-76; Eddie Hobbs, 1976-77; Ken Moyle, 1977-78; Jerry Paulsen, 1978-79; Paul Bailey, 1979-80; Vic Cataldo, 1980-81; Bill Warner, 1981-82; Jack King-Ellison, 1982-83; Tom Brennan, 1983-84; and Gil Collins, 1984-85.■

Soroptimist International



The Soroptimist International of Yucca Valley was organized and chartered in 1966, following sponsorship by the Twentynine Palms club. District President Briggette Page, from Banning, was very instrumental in helping for form the local club.

The Charter President was Kay Vilott. There were fifty charter members. Besides Kay, there are only two remaining charter members who are still active. They are Alice Johnson and Joan Todtman. The club, however, retains its original strength with thirty active members and a good number of honorary, sustaining, life and special members. Many of the active Soroptimists are new members of recent years.

Betty Argoe succeeded Kay as president in 1967; Patsy Skidmore in 1968; Kay Vilott again in 1969 and '70; Frances Boyd in 1971 and '72; Patsy Skidmore returned to office in 1973; Ellie DeuSchel in 1974; Joan Todtman in 1975; Kay Baker in 1976 and '77; Carol Hayes in 1978; Kathy Malin in 1979 and Patti Funk in 1980.

The officers for 1981-'82 are Betty Collins, president; Joan Todtman, president-elect, Melba Carlton, vice president; Lorraine Marino, corresponding secretary; Carol Pervy, recording secretary; Carol Hayes, treasurer; Kathy Malin, one-year director; and Patti Funk, two-year director.

Among the club's earlier community projects were the assistance given the Hearts of Yucca Valley in getting organized, the setting up of the Scholarship Fund Program for local students, establishing the House Beautiful Tours, supporting the hospital and highway projects and supplying Grubstake Days Buttons.

More recent projects include working on the Harvest Hoe-Down, the Aluminum Can Conservation Campaign, establishing a Half-way House for Alcoholic Women and sponsoring a Re-education Program for under-privileged women.

The local Soroptimists also sponsor the S Club at Yucca Valley High School. This year's S Club officers are Susan Perri, president; Pat Galka, vice president; Danelle Mudd, recording secretary; Donna Grant, corresponding secretary; and Kathy Slater, treasurer. Faculty advisor is Margaret Hyek, Soroptimist advisor is Cookie White and Maureen Gamel.

The membership of both the senior and junior clubs take pride in the fact that Charter President Kay Vilott is listed in Who's Who In America as an American Businesswoman from San Bernardino County. ■

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One of the first slogans suggested for promotional use by the chamber was, "Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring — Four good reasons for living in Yucca Valley."

General Telephone

When World War II ended Galdys Longshaw, a former WAC, was among the new people moving into the Hi-Desert. A new business that was also moving in at that time generated quite a bit of excitement and comment.

It was the California Water and Telephone Company. They hired Gladys Longshaw as the first telephone operator and set up an office in the small building off of Desertaire and Park Blvd. in Joshua Tree. She ran the switchboard and lived in the rear. All the customers had 3-digit numbers. In those days there were more homes in Joshua Tree than in Yucca Valley. By 1947, the first phones were installed in Yucca Valley, hooked on three ten-party lines. When last checked they were still busy.

Mrs. Longshaw trained Mary Ford's young daughter, Norma (Ojala), how to operate the switchboard so that whenever the town gave a fund-raising event for the building of the future Community Hall Mrs. Longshaw could go, too. Norma proved to be a responsible pupil. Not at all bad for a girl of twelve! It was generally thought that since most of the town would be at the fund-raiser anyway, the switchboard wouldn't be too busy.

YUCCA VALLEYS first Telephone Office and Switchboard. All handled ably by Gladys Longshaw Bassett.

Mrs. Longshaw (now Mrs. Bassett) retired in 1955 when California Water and Telephone switched over to Joshua Tree 5 and Joshua Tree 6 prefixes and installed new dial system equipment. Around 1958 the phone company adopted the Forest prefix. Then in 1960 Forest gave way to 365 and 366.

GLADYS LONGSHAW BASSETT at the Switchboard — 1947.

Although California Water and Telephone was affectionately known as "good old Sprinkle and Tinkle," there was no disguising the pride the town felt in 1964 when the Open House crowd toured the newly-constructed Toll Center and Business Office on Yucca Trail. The phone company had occupied The Lombard Building while awaiting the finishing touches on its new headquarters. Prior to that it had been located in Twentynine Palms.

General Telephone bought out California Water and Telephone in 1967. A count in 1968 showed there were between 7,000 and 8,000 primary telephones installed in the whole Morongo Basin. As of March, 1981, there were 5,880 residential and 823 business phones in Yucca Valley only.

If one were to look back through the old phone books it would be possible to trace the area's development. For instance, the 1953 book had ten pages of subscribers' listings and 37 pages of classified ads. By 1960 there were 24 pages of subscribers' listings and 110 yellow pages. Both of these directories were the smaller size of 9 1/4" x 6 1/8".

A milestone was reached in 1969 when Mrs. Camilla Hudson was the recipient of the first telephone in Pipes Canyon. Johnson Valley joined the ranks with its first telephones in 1970.

Yucca Valley got direct distance dialing in 1978. For the early-day residents who remember the old-style pay phones (where you dialed, got your party and **then** dropped your dime in) this was quite an innovation.

When California Water and Telephone was working on the new toll center in Yucca Valley, Jim Riggs was the Customer Services Supervisor and Jim Simpson was the Service Center Supervisor. Both of these long-time Yucca Valleyians have subsequently been transferred to General's Indio offices and promoted. Riggs to Customer Services Superintendent and Simpson to Service Center Superintendent. E.C. "Buzz" Kropf has been the Exchange Manager in Yucca Valley for thirteen years. ■

Kiwanis of Yucca Valley

The Kiwanis Club of Yucca Valley was chartered in December, 1961, and was sponsored by the Montebello Kiwanis Club. Its president was Hugh (Pop) Leonard, one of the area's early-day residents who watched its growth and development with a special sparkle in his eye.

Other local presidents have been Art Chase, Dr. Richard Nahhas, Ted Trevett, Charlie Barner, Pat Toy, Bob Hettig, Jerry Ducey, John List, Ron Prescott, Dave Eckenroth, Jack Thomas and Bob Marinello. The 1981-82 president is Gary Bowman.

His fellow club members feel that Jerry Ducey has brought distinction and honor to them by rising to and serving as Kiwanis Lieutenant Governor in 1978-1979.

The local club has been involved in many programs and projects for the benefit of the community, especially the youth of the community. Some are well-known and widely recognized as club projects. Others are carried on quietly and in comparative anonymity. But, one of the club's happiest and noisiest projects, and one which has produced super-charged feelings and spirit, has been the Kiwanis Victory Bell! Charlie Barner, representing the Kiwanis Club of Yucca Valley, presented the bell to Keith Lee, Yucca Valley High School principal, at the conclusion of the first football game between the Yucca Valley Trojans and the Twentynine Palms Wildcats in 1968. Since then the perpetual trophy has gone back and forth between the two rival schools.

The Kiwanis Club has consistently maintained scholarships for Yucca Valley High School graduates, sponsored the school's Key Club, sponsored music students' continued studies and was instrumental in starting and contributing to the High School Band Uniform Fund Raising Campaign.

In addition the club has sponsored and paid for the Bicycle Safety Programs at the Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Morongo Valley Elementary Schools; Kiwanis Kids' Day for the recognition of athletic and physical prowess; the Annual Easter Egg Hunt; and the Junior Olympics for handicapped children. The last time the latter was held it drew participants from Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Giego as well as the closer Inland Empire sectors.

Still other worthwhile club projects include removing the graffiti from the faces of the boulders and other big rocks along Old Woman Springs Road and making periodic contributions to the Hi-Desert Nature Museum. The last instance of this was the recent donation of a new display case.

The last two years the club has been in charge of the Grubstake Days Parade, working out all the details of the annual event from keeping track of all of the floats to handling the traffic barricades before, during and after the parade.

One of the most satisfying projects that the club has been involved in has to be restoring of the old schoolhouse on Yucca Trail. It started when Ted Jurling, owner of the property, donated the schoolhouse to the Yucca Valley Kiwanis Club. The members built new doors, put on a new roof, painted it, generally upgraded it and installed a $1,600 fence around the property. At the 1974 dedication ceremonies, attended by Mr. and Mrs. Jurling, a heavy wooden plaque, built especially for the purpose in Big Bear, was presented and installed over the entry gate. It designated the property as Ted Jurling's Kiwanis Scouts Park. For the use of all Scouts, at present it is the site of the Cub Scout and Girl Scout activities. This was a truly fine club effort since is simultaneously preserved an historic landmark and provided a center for the local Scouts to use and enjoy.

In all of the Kiwanians' good deeds they have been most ably assisted by their wives — the Kiwanettes. ■

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After taking ten months to compile and cross-index every known fact and data about each resident, Bob Barngrover and Joan Wilson put out a city directory and street map. They called themselves the Yucca Valley Publishing Co. and they were located in the building at the corner of the Twentynine Palms Highway and Inca Trail, now occupied by Paul Bailey.

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Florence Harmon took over the Yucca Valley Coffee Shop from Marie and Ed Edwards on August 1, 1957. She also got their recipe for lemon chiffon pie from the Edwards. Florence sold over 700 cuts of that fantastic pie per month during her tenure. Mary Christianson helped Florence in the coffee shop.

Yucca Valley Board of Realtors

With the opening of Yucca Valley's first subdivision could an active real estate board be far behind? Of course not! And a good thing, too, since this since this group became one of the town's guiding lights.

On May 3, 1949, the first organized real estate board in the area held an organizational/installation dinner meeting at Bouchey's. Altogether, there were twenty brokers and associates who had gathered to witness the start of the professional group which was named the Pioneer Desert Real Estate Board. Frank Whitelock, of San Bernardino, was the organizing officer.

Board officers elected that first night were Pat J. O'Neil, Morongo Valley, president; Charles Mitchell, Joshua Tree, vice president; Cyril Millington, Morongo Valley, secretary-treasurer. The first board of directors were Gwen Bouchey, Yucca Valley; E.R. Williams, Yucca Valley; J.C. Eisenbouch, Pioneertown; and John L. Duncan, Joshua Tree.

That organizational night was quite a significant event for the desert area real estate industry. And, while those officers (the original seven members) did not hear a distant drum-roll as they performed their duties, the work they accomplished laid the groundwork for what was to follow.

One of the last boards under the Pioneer Desert name was the executive panel of 1958. Paul Goakes, Morongo Valley, was president; Al Peters, Yucca Valley, was vice president; and Ethel Stine, Yucca Valley, was secretary-treasurer.

In 1960, the official name was changed to the Yucca Valley Board of Realtors. President Carl Piazza pledged that the high ethical standards and goals set by the original group would remain unchanged.

THE FIRST PIONEER Desert Realty Board elected, May 3, 1949. They are left to right Cyril Millington — Secretary & Treasurer, J.C. Eisenbuch, Bill Williams, John Duncan, Charles Mitchell, Gwen Bouchey, Pat O'Neil — President & Installing Officer.

While some jokesters tease about "Escrow Indians," it is generally acknowledged and appreciated that throughout the years the membership, which has grown to well over 150, has been professionally and morally involved in the orderly and steady growth of the area. They generously gave their time and expertise in promoting the goals of adequate police and fire protection, roads, zoning, hospital and educational facilities, parks and recreational programs. In all of these endeavors they worked in close liaison with governmental agencies at all levels.

Those realtors who have served as presidents of the board include Pat O'Neil, 1949; Charles Mitchell, 1950; E.R. Williams, 1951; Wilson Lindsey, 1952; John Duncan, 1953; Honey Fellers, 1954; Hugh Green and Duncan, 1955; Lindsey, 1956; Charles Watkins and Paul Goakes, 1957; Goakes, 1958; Al Peters, 1959; Carl Piazza, 1960; Luther Colvin, 1961; Mary Hugentugler, 1962; Hugh Leonard, 1963; Bill Hanson, 1964; Phyllis Grubaugh, 1965; Harold Dunn, 1966; Gilbert Buck, 1967; Peters, 1968-69; Chic Helvey, 1970; Colvin, 1971; Helen Pearman, 1972; Colvin, 1973; Ernie Sall, 1974-76; David Meyer, 1977-78; Leona Hille, 1979-80; and the current president, Bill Myers, 1981.

Among those, in the past who served as vice presidents were Dorothy Sall, Dorothy Turnham, Walter Baker, Mitchell, Peters, Piazza, Colvin and Pearman.

Cyril Millington, Ethel Stine, Mary Otis, Alfred Fisher and Jean Nichols have served as secretary-treasurer. Judy Wolcott is in that post at the present time.

The Yucca Valley Board of Realtors is a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards and its members belong to the California Real Estate Association. In 1963 it was the second largest local board in the 28th CREA District, which consists of boards in the lower and Hi-Desert. Today it ranks third in size, holding its own among the very large memberships in Palm Springs and Palm Desert. There are 47 real estate offices in the town of Yucca Valley alone. ■

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Betty Brownell, using her advertising contacts, got Yucca Valley on the first set of oil company maps in 1968.

Yucca Valley Rotary Club

When the Yucca Valley Rotary Club was being organized in 1957, it was under the joint sponsorship of the Rotary Clubs of Twentynine Palms and Yorba Linda. Its formation meeting, held at the old Wagon Wheel Restaurant on November 18, 1957, was attended by District Governor Harry Harper; Dr. J.W. Yale, president of the Yorba Linda club; and, from the Twentynine Palms club, President Moorhead, Ted Richardson, Bob Vanlahr, Earl Swain, Walt Worth, Dick Lathrop, Earl Walker and Judge John Allen.

Potential and future Yucca Valley Rotarians were Wes Yale, acting president, C.H. Jacobs, acting secretary, Terry Pausch, Roger Stine, Ollie M. Donald, Joe Freeman, Pat Thornton, Roy Caldwell, John Richards, Herb Medack, Rev. Ramsey Williams, Jack Coffman, Bill Goodwin, Allan Sears and K. T. Belcher.

The club's organization meeting was held on December 16, 1957. It received its charter on January 18, 1958. Since Wes Yale carried out most of the initial detail work in getting the club organized and on the move, it was deemed fitting that he become the first president. And when the club was chartered, it was immediately unique. It was the first time in Rotary that a father and son served simultaneously as club presidents. Wes at Yucca Valley, his son at Yorba Linda. Wes also earned some distinction by being a charter member of both clubs.

The Yucca Valley charter board included Wes Yale, president; Terry Pausch, vice president; C. H. Jacobs, secretary; Earl Deal, sgt.-at-arms; and directors Joe Freeman, Roger Stine, Wilburn Lewis and Earl Mac Donald.

Later in 1958, Terry Pausch succeeded Wes Yale as president. It was Terry's inspiration that kept the club going, gave it momentum and lent it a humanitarian touch. Early residents of Yucca Valley recollect the crusade for an ambulance and the help for a blind resident of the town. Rotarians remember the dignity with which Terry conducted the meetings, though beset with great physical pain from an illness that was soon to claim his life.

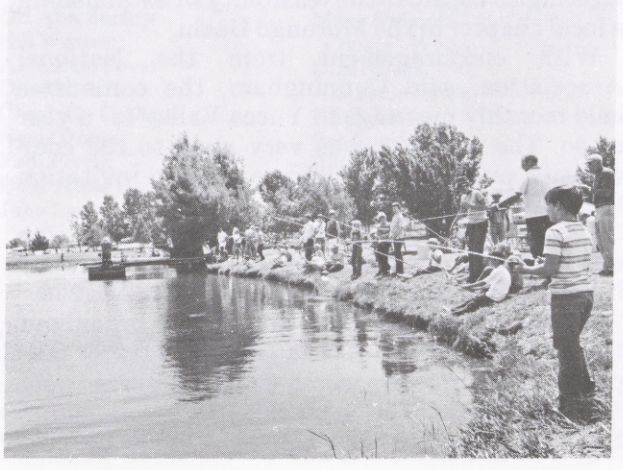
Members who also have served as presidents are Bill Lewis, 1959; Ted Morton, 1960; Neal Groom, 1961; Ken Tornborg, 1962; Al Gilbert, 1963; Bob Nordyke, 1964; Dr. William O. Autery, Jr., 1965; Jim Riggs, 1966; Sam Loewen, 1967; Dale Harrison, 1968; Bill Edmondson, 1969; Ted Fogel, 1970; Walt Altnow, 1971; Buzz Kropf, 1972; Al LeFevre, 1973; and George Petro, 1974.

Still others have been Frank Page, 1975; George Derrington, 1976; Duck Dowell, (succeeded Phil Quayne6, 1977; Al Peters, 1978; Dennis Hinde, 1979; Irl Greer, 1980; and Glen Zanella, (succeeded Jack Everett), 1981.

Under the guidance of all of these presidents, and in addition to the clubs' regular and traditional programs and projects the Yucca Valley Rotary Club engaged in many supportive and developmental community efforts.

Some of these local programs and projects included the donating of a PA System for the Yucca Valley High School Gym, furnishing a room at Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, presenting an ever-growing number of annual scholarships to high school seniors, participating regularly in Grubstake Days and sponsoring the Whisker Contest, establishing The Yuccatarian news bulletin, inviting the club members' wives to become Rotary-Anns, donating an orthopedic high chair and other items to the Desert Hot Springs Angel View Children's Hospital, sponsoring the Interact youth service club at the

THE ROTARY CLUB has sponsored many civic activities. Among them was, for several years, the Children's Fishing Derby at Blue Skies Golf Club.



high school and assisting that club's regular visits to Angel View, sponsoring Career Days at the high school, supporting the Retarded Students of the Desert Foundation, introducing the interschool "Four Way Test" public-speaking competition, donating heavily to the American Field Service Foreign Student Exchange Program, assisting in the Drug-Abuse Program, providing fish for the Youth Fish Derby at Blue Skies Country Club, sponsoring Little League teams and the Yucca Valley Swim Team, sponsoring a Girl Scout troop, putting up school-safety signs, sponsoring the Rotary Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament, building the fence around the high school campus, donating funds for high school band uniforms, sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt and building an activity marquee at the high school.

Still other club projects which have aided the community are the providing of lights for Desert Christ Park, building the shooting range at Yucca Park and sponsoring numbers of "Turkey Shoot" Contests, supporting the Heart Association Fund Drive, filling and distributing annual Christmas baskets, contributing to the Cancer Crusade, developing the landscaping for Triangle Park and helping to clean up the town, supporting the Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge, building a service club signpost on the edge of town, repairing and contributing "The Goddess of Flight" statue by Antone Martin to the present-day Community Center, building and lighting the Welcome Sign at the west end of Yucca Valley and building a barbecue pit in the Joshua Tree park.

Focusing on its International Relations Program, the club has had direct contact with a club in Warmbad, South Africa, and also with a community in Mexico. It is also a 200% Rotary Foundation Club assisting the Foreign Students' Education program.

Under Sam Loewen and Dale Harrison the ten year old club stepped out and played an active role in the Desert Council of Rotary Clubs. But the members are especially proud of George Petro, who became the Hi-Desert's first district governor after he was demoted from his Yucca Valley Club presidency. ■

A.A.R.P.

Louis Cunningham, charter president of the Yucca Valley chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons, said the local effort started with a committee meeting.

There were several high desert residents who were members of the National Association of the AARP. Its headquarters were in Washington, D.C. They formed a committee and held a meeting to consider the feasibility of establishing a local chapter in the Morongo Basin.

With encouragement from the National Association, said Cunningham, the committee held monthly meetings in Yucca Valley for a year or so. The response was very good to the committee's publicity campaign and open invitation to eligible people.

In 1964, the AARP's National Office granted a charter to the local group, said Cunningham, and it was designated Yucca Valley Chapter No. 236.

Monthly meetings have continued throughout the years and the Yucca Valley chapter has participated in many worth while activities in the Morongo Basin. The AARP, being a Community Services Organization, has as its motto "TO SERVE - NOT TO BE SERVED." The Yucca Valley chapter lives up to its motto, but also finds time for enjoyable social get-togethers, too. From those first few committee attendees, the membership rolls have grown to 400 people by the end of 1981.

Members who have served as President of Yucca Valley Chapter No. 236 are, in order, Louis Cunningham, 1964; Arthur Chase, 1965-66; Arthur Jerchow, 1967-68; Margaret Winne, 1969-70; Leroy King, 1971; Joan Hoffman, 1972-74; Conrad Lange, 1975; Ruth Murray, 1976-77; Jack Brenda, 1978; Al Perrault, 1979; Merwin McCoy, 1980; and Ruth Murray, 1981. ■

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Sky Drive In Theatre opened for business on June 3, 1959.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Osborn's Market opened on August 14, 1959.

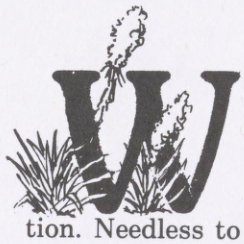
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Alamo Market also opened in August, 1959.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Mr. and Mrs. Dick Miller opened their insurance office in 1959. They represented Safeco Insurance and other national companies.

Thank You



We would like to offer a very special "Thank you" to the following people for their willingness and cooperation in supplying pictures and information. Needless to say, this book would not have been possible without their participation. We would also like to thank everyone mentioned in these pages for choosing to live in the Hi-Desert for they have added the warm, flesh and blood dimentions to the story of Yucca Valley. If we have inadvertently omitted anyone from this book we apologize and ask that persons knowing of such oversights let us know so they may be included in subsequent editions. At this point, the one firm promise made to the readers is that a sequel will not be entitled "Heritage of Yucca Valley II." Finally, special mention should be made of the encouragement and great patients of Ken Witting, who probably thought he would never get his pictures back after all these years! Again, many thanks to:

Loretta and Ralph Fields
Roger Melanson
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Bob & Doni Stephenson
Tommy and Gwen Bouchey
Norm and Elmarie Essig
Ann and Milt Murry
Bob Schoenleber
Jule & Val Boldizsar
Paul & Lily Griswold
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Mabel & Harry Housh
Nancy Rengert
Evelyn & Lem Parsons
Hank & Lois Scott
Maude Landgraf
Norm Granger
George & Emily Balazs
Camilla Hudson
Alma Katje
Jack Weaver
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Ken and Louise Witting
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Margaret Keck
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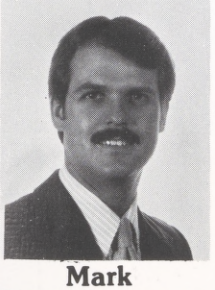

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